the weekly Standard

DECEMBER 17, 2007

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on Obama's ascent

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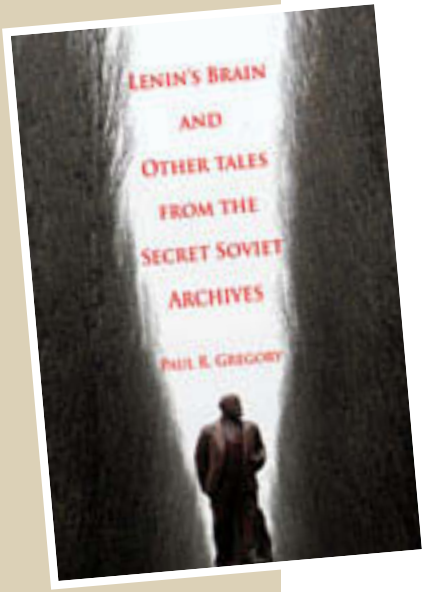

Lenin's Brain and Other Tales from the Secret Soviet Archives

PAUL R. GREGORY

The opening of the once-secret Soviet state and party archives in the early 1990s proved to be an event of exceptional significance. When Western scholars broke down the official wall of secrecy that had stood for decades, they gained access to intriguing new knowledge they had previously only been able to speculate about. In this fascinating volume, Paul Gregory takes us behind the scenes and into the archives to illuminate the dark inner workings of the Soviet Union.

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Paul R. Gregory, a Hoover Institution research fellow, holds an endowed professorship in the Department of Economics at the University of Houston, Texas, and is a research professor at the German Institute for Economic Research in Berlin.

November 2007, 250 pages
ISBN: 978-0-8179-4811-5
$25.00, cloth

ISBN: 978-0-8179-4812-2
$15.00, paper

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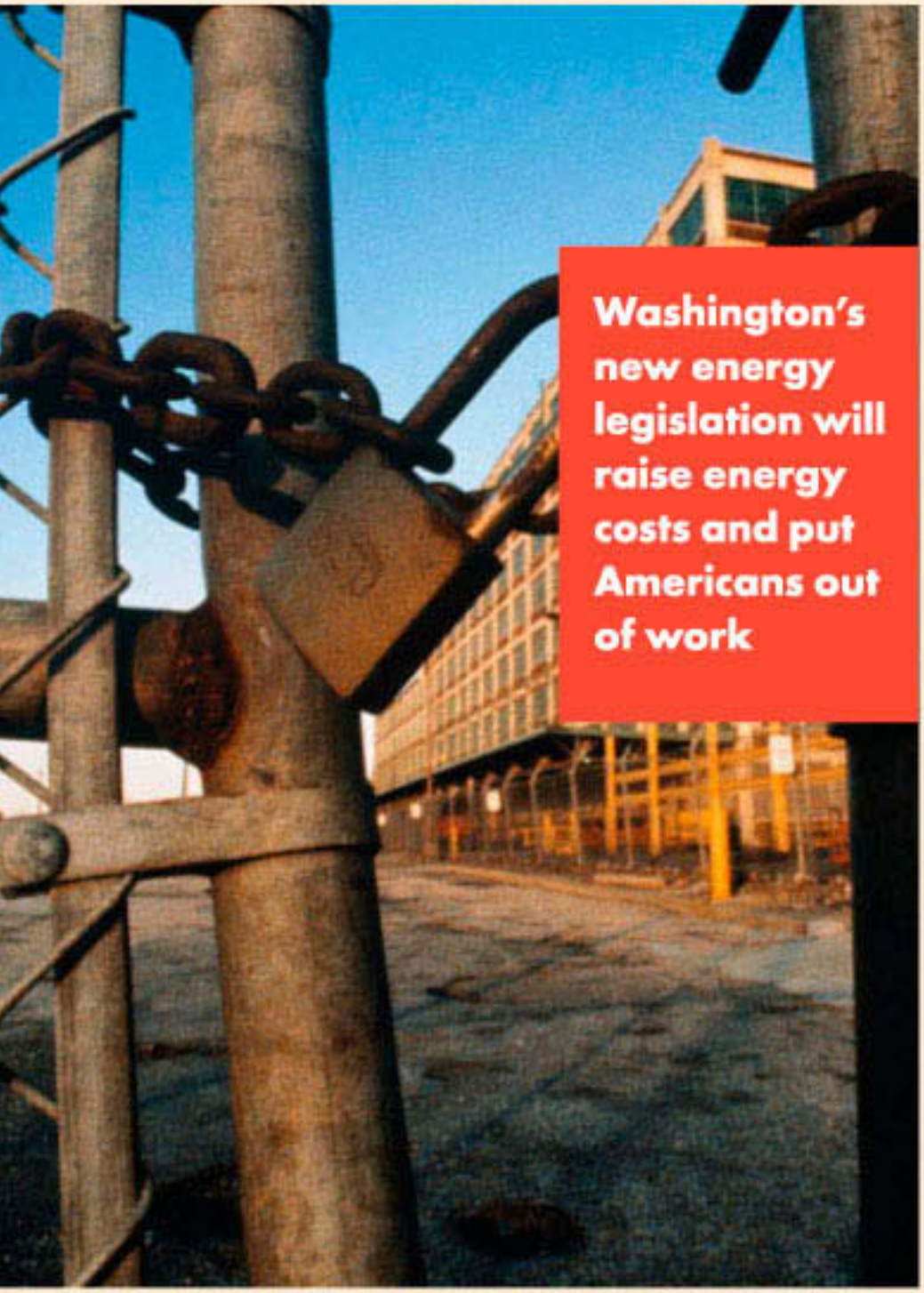
Can America's economy afford Congress' ~~energy~~ bill?

Layoffs, new taxes and cost spikes



Congress will soon consider sweeping new energy legislation that will raise energy taxes, cost American jobs and further limit the nation's access to domestic energy supplies.

The legislation's energy tax hikes and gasoline price controls will raise energy costs for American consumers, manufacturers and businesses – hurting economic growth and driving high-paying American jobs overseas. The legislation even reduces our ability to increase domestic oil and natural gas reserves here at home – increasing reliance on foreign sources of energy.

We need energy policies that support American jobs and increase supplies of energy from all sources to meet future generations' demand. Congress should reject these provisions of the energy bill and get to work on legislation to secure our energy future.

Reject Congress' Energy Bill

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the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2007, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Sing a Song of Hillary

Last week in these pages, Matt Labash explored the song stylings of the Ronulans, or Ron Paul fanatics, such as they were. In the course of doing so, he threw an elbow to the solar plexus of Hillary Clinton, charging that her campaign song, "You and I" was a "perfect choice" since it is "saccharine, turns on synthetic emotion, and is sung by Celine Dion, one of the few people with a voice more cloying than her own." A few days later, the Clinton campaign dropped the song. Coincidence?

Camp Clinton hasn't said why they dropped Dion. But perhaps the song was doomed from the start. What worse way to show that you're in step with American voters than to pick something sung by a Canadian? (In fairness, Hillary had done what all Clintons do when faced with vexing personal dilemmas—she focus-grouped it. The choice was made after she'd held a contest to pick her campaign song.)

As a loyal Hillary supporter, The Scrapbook is tempted to suggest obvious substitutes. But the Eagles' "Witchy Woman," Elton John's "The Bitch Is Back," and Brownie McGhee's "Big Legged Woman" would be too easy. We're better than that. Besides, now comes word that her campaign has gone with "Blue Sky," by Big Head Todd and the Monsters—a song that was written for the crew of the Space Shuttle *Discovery* for the first flight after the *Columbia* disaster.

It is perhaps worth noting that even with the help of Big Head Todd, the return flight suffered all manner of setbacks: unresolved fuel sensor anomalies, debris separating from the external tank during ascent as with *Columbia*, a large bird striking near the tank during lift-off, a small piece of foam striking the orbiter's wing which caused NASA to announce it was delaying future shuttle flights until the problem could be resolved, and unsuitable weather causing both the postponement and relocation of the landing.

With Hillary now trailing Obama in Iowa polling, here's hoping for her sake that she gets more of a lift from the song than NASA did. If not, she might want to go with a slightly retooled version of the Queen anthem: "We Were the Champions." ♦

What He Was Thinking

VLADIMIR PUTIN VISITS MOSCOW RESTAURANT, DECEMBER 2007. D. ASTAKHOV / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

Scanners

The Scrapbook, which believes strongly in science in the public interest, was intrigued to run across an op-ed piece in last Wednesday's edition of the *Los Angeles Times*. The author was Dr. Daniel G. Amen, an Orange County neuropsychiatrist who owns a nationwide chain of brain-scanning clinics, and his thesis was an original one: He wants "our elected leaders to be some of the 'brain healthiest people' in the land. How do you know about the brain health of a presidential candidate unless you look?" It turns out that the answer is as obvious as the cash register in Dr. Amen's waiting room: Require every presidential candidate to have a brain scan.

As you might imagine, Dr. Amen makes his case with some harrowing examples from recent history. Did you know that "three of the last four presidents have shown clear brain patholo-

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of June 14, 1999)

gy?" According to Dr. Amen, "Few people knew it, but we had a national crisis" because Ronald Reagan's Alzheimer's disease "was evident during his second term." Bill Clinton's "moral lapses and problems with bad judgment and excitement [were] indicative of problems in the prefrontal cortex." And of course, "one could argue that our current president's struggles with language and emotional rigidity are symptoms of temporal lobe pathology."

One could also argue that since some of our most inspiring chief executives parted their hair on the left, not the right, side of the head—Abraham Lincoln, both Roosevelts, John F. Kennedy—we should require a certified cosmetologist to examine the coiffures of presidential candidates.

Of course, The Scrapbook would be the last place to make light of the dread possibility of temporal lobe pathology, or problems of the prefrontal cortex, in the Oval Office. But Dr. Amen's op-ed proposal reminds us of one of the least edifying incidents in modern presidential journalism: the September-October 1964 issue of the now-defunct magazine *Fact*, the cover of which proclaimed that "1,189 Psychiatrists Say Goldwater Is Psychologically Unfit To Be President!"

Publisher Ralph Ginzburg had sent a letter to 12,356 psychiatrists, whose names had been supplied by the American Medical Association, asking the following question: "Do you believe Barry Goldwater is psychologically fit to serve as President of the United States?" Of the 2,417 who bothered to respond, according to Ginzburg, "571 said that they did not know enough about Goldwater to answer the question; 657 said they thought Goldwater was psychologically fit; and 1,189 said that he was not."

It's unlikely that *Fact*'s questionnaire contributed to Goldwater's defeat by Lyndon Johnson the following month, but the episode was a low point for political journalism in America—not to mention the ethical sensibilities of those physicians foolish enough to answer Ginzburg's inquiry and make public assertions about the mental health of someone they had never met. In the event, Goldwater successfully sued Ginzburg for defamation, who later (in an unrelated case) spent eight months in prison for violation of obscenity laws.

It's common to suggest that one's political adversaries are crazy or delusional; that's standard schoolyard rhetoric, not meant to be taken literally. But when physicians—especially ones with commercial interests at stake—make unfounded claims in the media about the sanity of complete strangers, it is a startling violation of professional ethics. Whether it is Justin Frank, M.D., of George Washington University, who asserts in his *Bush on the Couch* that George W. Bush is a "paranoid megalomaniac . . . [with a] lifelong streak of sadism," and James Grotstein, M.D., of UCLA and Irvin Yalom, M.D., of Stanford, who extol Frank's casual libel, or Dr. Daniel G. Amen and his chain of brain-scan emporiums, the only thing worse than their irresponsibility is the judgment of a newspaper that would grant them a public forum. ♦

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Casual

Crate Expectations

Since we moved into our home last year, a secret has resided in our basement. It is a blue and black steamer trunk, and I'd never gotten around to opening it, for two reasons. One, there's a lock and no key. I've picked a few locks in my time (two, to be precise, and they were on luggage), but this particular one may require a device larger than a hairpin. And two, if I could open the trunk, would I really want to know what's inside? After all, it is quite heavy and big enough to fit a body—in pieces.

Recently, though, I was prompted to take action after catching a show on the National Geographic Channel about the Ark of the Covenant, the vessel containing the Ten Commandments. Did the Egyptians seize it during a raid on the Temple of Jerusalem? Was it secreted in Ethiopia or taken to England during the Crusades? And if the Ark does exist, what lies inside?

Not that I believe the Ten Commandments have been stowed away in Arlington, Virginia. But curiosity simply got the better of me—are we talking about old clothes, personal records, books? At one point during the Stephen King movie *Creepshow*, a janitor at a university stumbles upon a cellar crate with markings from a polar expedition. Naturally he opens it and is ripped apart by a bloodthirsty creature. But I also thought about "Al Capone's Vaults," in which investigative journalist Geraldo Rivera broke into a series of safes belonging to Scarface on live television, without finding much of anything.

I jokingly tell friends who overnight in our basement to beware of the trunk and hope they don't hear a voice emanating from it like the one on that episode of *The Brady Bunch* when the girls played a prank on the boys involving a similar chest in the attic and a voice that whispered "Help me, I can't breathe."

At this juncture I must disclose that although I am unaware of what lies inside the trunk, my wife knows because it belongs to her. When she first moved into my apartment three years ago, we lugged that trunk into our bedroom, where it sat unopened. Movers then carried it over to our new house. Whenever I ask "What's in it?" she replies cryptically, "Memorabilia."

DARREN GYGI

Now this could mean anything—including old love letters and photos from before my time. (Yes, I too was shocked to learn she had dated before we met.) So again, I ask myself, is it any of my business? Do I really want to see pictures from her unmentioned vacation to Hedonism III Jamaica? On the other hand, do I want future generations opening the trunk and reading letters straight out of *The Bridges of Madison County*?

Not on my watch. So one night last week, before the Mrs. returned home from work, I went down to the basement and within minutes managed to unlock the trunk—by breaking it open.

No turning back now, I thought. After taking a deep breath, I lifted the lid and hoped whatever was inside would not melt my face off (as happened in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*). Instead, what I found were mounds of papers: old emails from work, a newspaper dated September 12, 2001, a Pope John Paul II commemorative calendar from 2000, an invitation to a 1999 dinner gala honoring Henry Hyde. There were mix tapes from 1995, photos from college graduation, a postcard from some guy named James saying how great it was to have met my (then unmarried) wife and inviting her to go biking with him to Mount Vernon. There was a lamp and a miniature Christmas tree. My wife had also saved a bull's-eye sheet from the time my friend took her to a target range. The paper was riddled with bullet holes, mostly near the center. I've since learned the handgun she fired was a .44 Ruger.

You're probably wondering by now if I felt dirty and ashamed. But, frankly, knowing that she has deadly aim with a heavy-duty firearm and that in a few hours I'd have to explain the broken lock to her had me terrified.

Joking aside, I pretty much knew there wasn't going to be a bombshell discovery. Pretty much. Although I acknowledge my wife had her own life before we dated and married, as man of the house, I felt compelled to know all. Wouldn't any married man have done the same? Maybe? Ultimately my better half rolled her eyes and laughed at my paranoia when I informed her about the trunk. I'm just relieved she wasn't hiding pictures from Hedonism III Jamaica. I hope she doesn't find mine.

Victorino Matus

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the weekly Standard

What Happened in 2003?

What highly significant word is nowhere to be found in the declassified summary of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran's nuclear intentions and capabilities? Iraq.

When did Iran (apparently) stop its nuclear weapons program—as distinct from its "civil" program of uranium enrichment, which of course is proceeding apace? In the fall of 2003. The NIE "assess[es] with high confidence that until fall 2003, Iranian military entities were working under government direction to develop nuclear weapons."

Why did Iran stop its nuclear weapons program? According to the NIE, "the program probably was halted primarily in response to international pressure." But, as Claudia Rosett pointed out in a trenchant analysis in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "If international pressure achieved such sterling results in Iran four years ago, then surely we deserve to know what, exactly, impressed Iran's rulers so thoroughly that they might have slammed on the brakes."

What did that pressure consist of? In the fall of 2003, the International Atomic Energy Agency had not yet referred the civil Iranian nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council. That happened in 2006, and the Security Council finally agreed on (weak) sanctions later that year. In the fall of 2003, the European Union had barely swung into action with its negotiations—which have gone nowhere in four years. The quasi-urgency displayed by both the IAEA and the EU in late 2003 was a result of fear that unless they got engaged, the United States might act unilaterally and militarily. Why such fear?

Much as the U.S. intelligence community, the IAEA, and the EU might prefer to forget it, we did overthrow Saddam Hussein in April 2003. As Rosett puts it, that "was the year in which Saddam Hussein became Exhibit A of the post-Sept.-11 era for what could happen to terror-linked tyrants who ignored America's demands that they abjure weapons of mass murder."

Did anyone notice? Muammar Qaddafi did. Libya, in late 2003, gave up its nuclear weapons program (which was, incidentally, more advanced than the IAEA believed) and invited U.S. experts in to dismantle it.

Perhaps Iran's mullahs also noticed. Perhaps they noticed, too, a large U.S.-led military force just across their border. More determined and stronger than Qaddafi, the mullahs did not dismantle their program. But they may have halted their nuclear weapon work, and their covert uranium-conversion and uranium-enrichment work. (Though the NIE acknowledges that "because of intelligence gaps," parts of the U.S. government "assess with only moderate confidence that the halt to those activities represents a halt to Iran's entire nuclear weapons program.") Still, Iran quite openly forged ahead with its easier-to-defend-publicly "civil" uranium enrichment program. And rather than dismantling or scrapping the "weapons" part of the program, Iran merely "halted" it. It may well be that Iran paused its work in that area simply to wait for the "civil" enrichment program to catch up, not slowing its overall push for nuclear weapons at all. We don't know.

What we do know, as the NIE acknowledges, is that "some combination of threats of intensified international scrutiny and pressures, along with opportunities for Iran to achieve its security, prestige, and goals for regional influence in other ways, might—if perceived by Iran's leaders as credible—prompt Tehran to extend the current halt to its nuclear weapons program." Given "Iran's considerable effort from at least the late 1980s to 2003 to develop such weapons," the NIE concludes, reasonably if tautologically, that "only an Iranian political decision to abandon a nuclear weapons objective would plausibly keep Iran from eventually producing nuclear weapons—and such a decision is inherently reversible."

Of course, all such political decisions are "inherently reversible." This coda is meant to induce fatalism about Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons. But if one chooses not to be fatalistic, and to think about what might induce an Iranian "political decision" to abandon its nuclear program, part of the answer, surely, is a more robust effort to pressure the Iranian regime. Another part is the credible use of force—as in 2003.

The final part is victory in Iraq. President Bush's successful shift in strategy in Iraq a year ago, as part of his commitment to finishing that job, remains his greatest contribution to peace in the Middle East. The complete and unequivocal defeat of al Qaeda and of Iranian-backed proxies in Iraq is the best way to show Iran that the United States is a serious power to be reckoned with in the region. Resisting the temptation to throw away success in Iraq by drawing down too fast or too deep is the greatest service this president can render his successor. Only if Bush wins in Iraq will the next president have a reasonable chance to defeat the threat of a nuclear-weapons-seeking Islamic Republic of Iran.

—*William Kristol*

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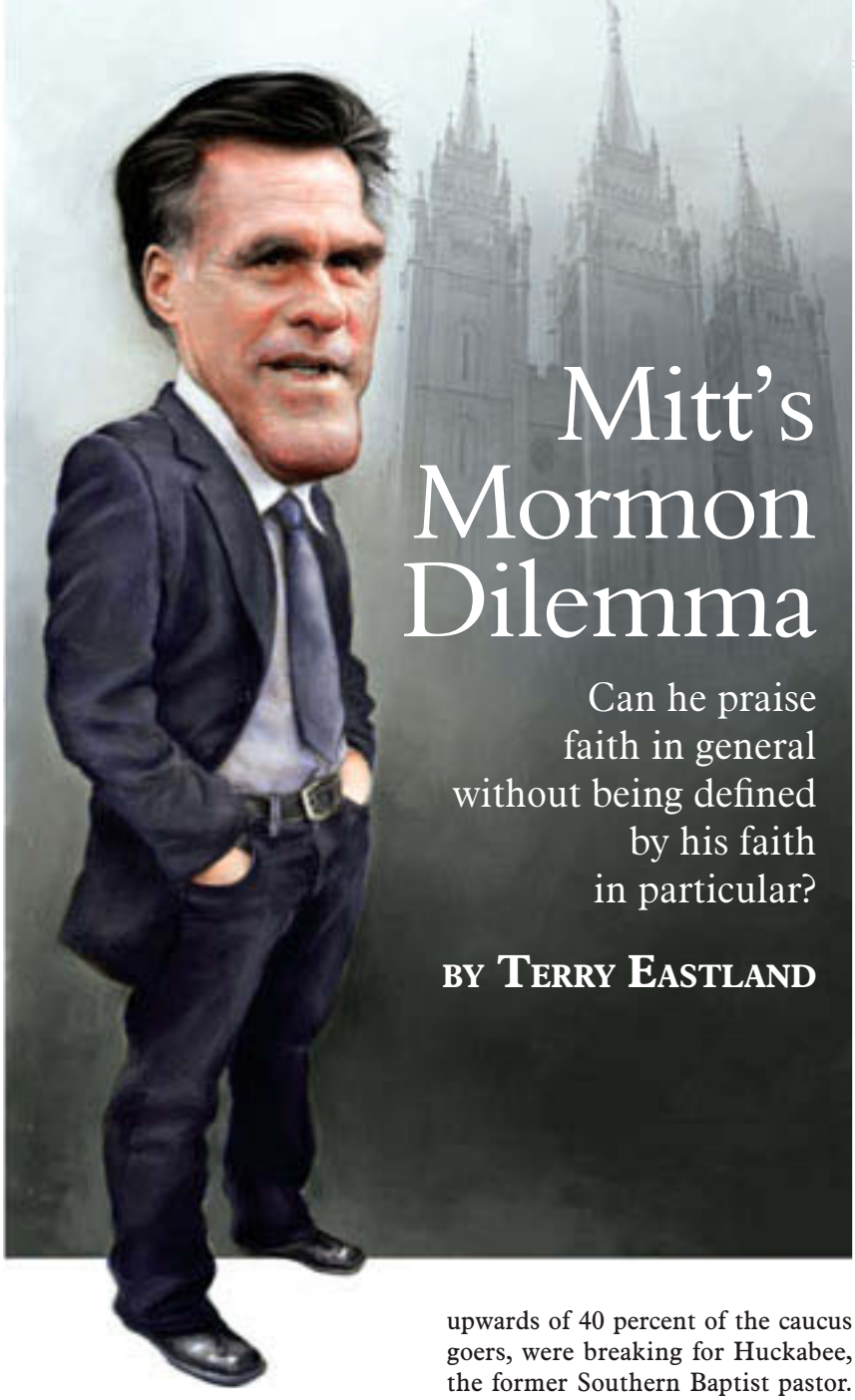

Mitt's Mormon Dilemma

Can he praise faith in general without being defined by his faith in particular?

BY TERRY EASTLAND

The question that has preoccupied the Mitt Romney campaign since its outset is whether voters will hold his Mormon faith against him.

The question assumed greater urgency in late November when polls showed Romney had lost his lead in Iowa—which kicks off the primary schedule with its caucus on January 3—to Mike Huckabee. These polls also indicated that evangelical conservatives, who may constitute upwards of 40 percent of the caucus goers, were breaking for Huckabee, the former Southern Baptist pastor. Evangelicals have tended to object more strongly than most other religious groups to the beliefs of Mormons, with some regarding Mormonism as a "cult." A fair reading of Iowa was that Romney's religion was not helping him with evangelicals.

The Romney campaign's strategy is based on winning in Iowa and then, five days later, in New Hampshire. The theory is that these victories would generate the momentum necessary to go all the way. With that strategy imperiled by the movement of evangelicals in Iowa toward Huckabee—a movement that could well presage similar developments in South Carolina and Florida—Romney gave a speech on religion last week at the George Bush Presidential Library at Texas A&M.

There was much in the speech that evangelicals and other religious conservatives will find to their liking. First, there was Romney's treatment of religious liberty. He said it is an inalienable right "with which each is endowed by his Creator." He implied it is, amongst all our liberties, the very first. Romney said he understood the religion clause of the First Amendment as being fundamentally about securing "the free practice of religion" and pointed out that while achieving religious liberty has been a long and arduous process, its benefits—"diversity of cultural expression" and "vibrancy of . . . religious dialogue"—are evident and contrast sharply with what you find in Europe, where established churches seem to be "withering away."

Second, Romney took a whack at those (unnamed) who take "the notion of the separation of church and state . . . well beyond its original meaning" by seeking "to remove from the public domain any acknowledgment of God." It is, he said, "as if they are intent on establishing a new religion in America—the religion of secularism. They are wrong." Romney called for public acknowledgments of God—"in ceremony and word." God "should remain on our currency, in our pledge, in the teaching of our history, and during the holiday season, nativity scenes and menorahs should be welcome in our public places." Romney even managed to work in a reference to judges, saying we need jurists who will stick to original meaning and let stand, for example, "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Third, Romney affirmed that religion is a force for the nation's well-being. "No movement of conscience can succeed in America that cannot speak to the convictions of religious people," he said, citing as examples abolition in the 19th century and civil rights in the 20th. He also

Terry Eastland is the publisher of The Weekly Standard.

JASON SEILER / BACKGROUND PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

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mentioned "the right to life itself," a movement not yet finished—and clearly of importance to many Republican primary voters.

These are points that, to one degree or another, the other Republican candidates would agree with. The unique challenge for Romney was to allay the concerns some people have about his church. One is whether as president he would take directions from the Mormon hierarchy in Salt Lake City. To this he said, drawing sharp lines of jurisdiction, "Let me assure you that no authorities of my church, or any other church for that matter, will ever exert influence on presidential decisions. Their authority is theirs, within the province of church affairs, and it ends where the affairs of the nation begin."

Nothing the current Mormon authorities have done suggests they would fail to stay within their churchly jurisdiction. Nor is there any aspect of Romney's tenure as governor of Massachusetts that suggests he failed to observe the distinction between church and state. The promise Romney made in his speech—that he would serve "no one religion, no one group, no one cause, and no one interest," but "only the common cause of the people of the United States"—is credible.

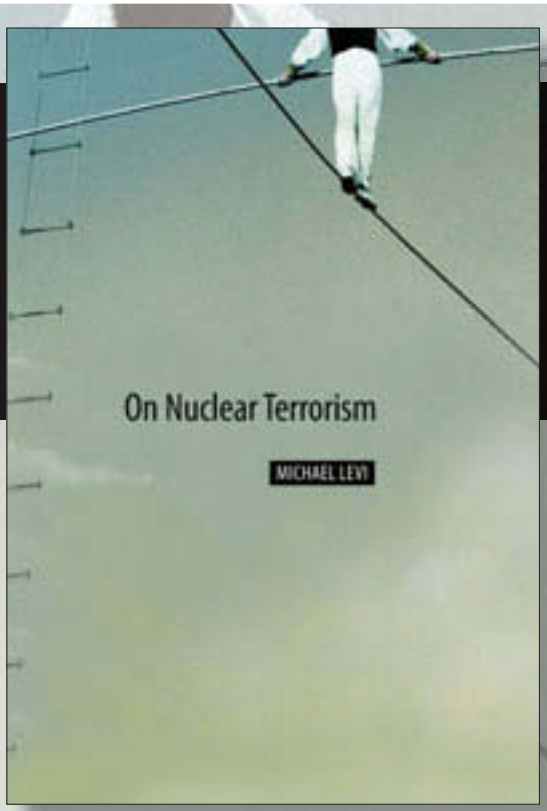
Romney raised the question of "how my own faith would inform my presidency, if I were elected," and his answer included nothing distinctively Mormon. Instead, as he explained, where Mormonism supports the same values as other faiths, those values—such as that of "compassionate care to others"—would inform his presidency.

Romney wanted his listeners to know, however, that the distinctions he draws between church and state do not mean that he only weakly believes. Indeed, he vigorously rejected the idea that he should distance himself from his religion—"say that it is more a tradition than my personal conviction, or disavow one or another of its precepts. That I will not do." He continued: "I believe in my Mormon faith and I endeavor to live by it. My faith is the faith of my fathers—I will be true to them and to my beliefs." Even, he said, if it costs him the election.

Here Romney came across as an authentic believer. For some voters, the issue, of course, is not *that* he believes but *what* he believes—i.e., what the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints teaches (such as that God has a material body and that there are other books of Scripture besides the Bible). LDS teachings are at variance with the basic beliefs of historic Christianity, held to not just by evangelicals, but also by mainline Protestants and Catholics.

But Romney firmly declined to go into LDS beliefs (though, in the course of stating that "my church's beliefs about Christ may not all be the same as those of other faiths," he did profess that "Jesus Christ is

On Nuclear Terrorism
MICHAEL LEVI



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the Son of God and Savior of mankind"). He gave a reason for his position: To have a presidential candidate "describe and explain his church's distinctive doctrines would enable the very religious test" for office prohibited in Article VI of the Constitution.

This article states: "No religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States." The constitutional scholar Akhil Amar has pointed out that this provision was well ahead of its time: In 1787 no fewer than 11 states, following the practice in Europe, actually imposed religious qualifications on government officials. Article VI, wrote Amar, made possible the election of "presidents of various denominations and even some men with no explicit religious affiliation, such as Jefferson and Lincoln."

Americans are of course free to vote for any reason, including the religion of a candidate. Knowing this, a candidate might offer his faith as a reason to vote for him—and perhaps not for someone else.

Romney is evidently concerned that Huckabee is just that kind of candidate and that this explains in substantial part his changing fortune in Iowa. Huckabee has emphasized that his faith "defines" him—and by implication his candidacy. He presents himself as a "Christian leader." Thus, while Romney has sought to downplay his Mormonism—it is not an electoral asset in Iowa—Huckabee has played up his faith. Romney's statement in his speech that "I do not define my candidacy by my religion" may fairly be read not only as an effort to calm anxieties about the prospect of a Mormon in the White House, but also as a response to how Huckabee is offering himself to Iowa voters.

Romney hasn't directly challenged Huckabee on this, and chances are he won't. He is too risk-averse to do something so bold. He may wind up being the victim of a dynamic that he had no effective means of overcoming. ♦

Through the Roof!

Democrats fall in love with taxes again.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

It wasn't so long ago that politicians assured voters that they would "raise taxes only as a last resort," as Michael Dukakis put it in 1988. When lawmakers did increase taxes, they would wring their hands and somberly declare how painful and distasteful this decision was. But nowadays in the Democratic party, raising taxes is regarded as a badge of honor and cause for celebration.

Consider the goings-on in Maryland. Three weeks ago Governor Martin O'Malley and the Democratic legislature in Annapolis passed a super-sized $1.3 billion tax increase. The package included higher income taxes, business taxes, sales taxes, computer taxes, tobacco taxes, and gas taxes. Pretty much anything that moves in the state got its taxes upped. It's not just the largest tax hike in the state's history but the first time in the history of the United States that a state has lifted its income tax, sales tax, and business tax all in the same year.

> When Governor Martin O'Malley and a Democratic legislature passed the largest tax hike in Maryland's history in November, it also was the first time ever that any state had raised its income tax, sales tax, and business tax all in the same year.

Stephen Moore is senior economics writer for the Wall Street Journal *editorial page.*

The mood in the state capital after the massive tax package was finally enacted at 2:00 a.m November 19 was not grim, but joyous. The politicians and the entire House gallery, which was packed with lobbyists who figure to get a good chunk of these tax dollars, erupted in spontaneous and prolonged applause. The applause soon turned into a back-slapping standing ovation. One observer noted, "You would have thought the Baltimore Orioles had just won the World Series." O'Malley had a grin on his face as large as the Baltimore harbor as he raised his arms in triumph at the bill signing ceremony. E.J. Dionne of the *Washington Post* serenaded O'Malley as a Democrat who isn't afraid of big government or raising taxes to fund it.

O'Malley is among a group of rising star Democrats in state capitals that seem to relish the opportunity to raise taxes—and not just on the rich. In Wisconsin, Governor Jim Doyle pushed a "universal" health care plan paid for with a 10 percent payroll tax surcharge levied on every working man and woman in the state. The measure would have made Milwaukee and Green Bay not just the highest-tax cities in the United States, but just about anywhere in the world outside of Sweden. Doyle is considered a "moderate" in the 21st-century Democratic party.

Then there is the glamorous Michigan governor, Jennifer Granholm—who raised business and income taxes this year despite polls showing intense opposition. Granholm fought doggedly for the tax package, even telling a statewide television audience that she would shut the government down in Lansing if she didn't get her infu-

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sion of cash from taxpayers. Michigan was the only state in the nation last year suffering a recession, and the state's unemployment rate is highest in the nation, so new taxes couldn't have come at a more inopportune time. But Granholm is convinced that raising business taxes in Michigan is an "investment" and that the higher costs for doing business will somehow lure more companies to her state. A darling of liberals, Granholm would be high on the Democrats' vice presidential list if only she hadn't been born in Canada.

Meanwhile, the Democrats who are running for president are in a feud over who's willing to raise the most taxes next year. Hillary Clinton qualifies as the "centrist" of the crew, because she only wants to raise the capital gains, dividend, and income tax rates. That pales in comparison to John Edwards: He's proposed a repeal of all the Bush tax cuts, new taxes on Wall Street investment houses, and a capital gains rate of 28 percent—higher even than when Bill Clinton left office. But the grand prize winner of the soak-the-rich contest is Senator Barack Obama, who also wants to extend the 15 percent Social Security payroll tax on all Americans earning over either $100,000 or $200,000—the details are still sketchy.

Martin O'Malley

GARY LOCKE

Former Bush administration chief economist Larry Lindsey notes that the Obama plan would raise marginal tax rates for many Americans higher than what prevailed under Jimmy Carter. For advocating a return to the tax rates of the stagflation era, Obama earns the accolade of being the "real progressive," according to liberal pundits.

If any of these Democrats were to win the White House, they wouldn't encounter much if any resistance from House speaker Nancy Pelosi or Senate majority leader Harry Reid. Last month the Democrats in the House—even many of the so-called moderate "blue dog" Democrats—approved the one-year down payment on Ways and Means Committee chairman Charlie Rangel's $1 trillion "mother of all tax increases." The tax hike the House approved would save the middle class from the Alternative Minimum Tax by raising taxes on Wall Street hedge fund managers. But this doesn't mean that only the rich will be gored: House and Senate Democrats have also approved a doubling of the federal cigarette tax—the levy that probably falls most heavily disproportionately on the backs of the poor and working class.

Why have Democrats suddenly become so overt and emboldened in their tax raising schemes? One explanation is that Democratic leaders have come to believe that taxes are no longer the radioactive issue with voters that they were in the 1980s and '90s. Maryland's O'Malley ridicules his conservative "no new taxes" critics and insists that "taxes are not a pestilence, plague, or disease."

With Republicans' poll numbers in the dumpster, liberals have come to interpret voter disgust with the GOP as a validation of their own old-school

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tax-and-spend mode of governance. Most of the Democrats' tax actions are disguised as hitting only the wealthiest few, who, as Obama puts it, "can afford to pay more." Democrats may well strike a populist chord with that theme, especially in a time of high economic anxieties, but the strategy is risky.

GOP pollster David Winston has been testing these propositions, and he finds that when "Democrats say tax the rich, most voters think their own taxes will go up." Winston's polling also shows the electorate thinks raising taxes when the economy is heading into a potential recession would be a nightmare. Evidence of the potential for a political backlash over higher taxes comes from Indianapolis, where just last month voters unexpectedly threw out a once-popular Democratic mayor in favor of a low-profile Republican with no money, no charisma, and no name recognition. Why? Voters were furious at a city-wide property tax hike last year.

In a 1988 *Saturday Night Live* skit called "Dukakis after Dark," Lloyd Bentsen asks Dukakis, "You were going to raise taxes, weren't you?" Dukakis shiftily looks around to make sure no one is listening and whispers: "Through the roof." How times have changed! Now Democrats are exposing their tax giddiness enthusiastically and in the light of day. It may be the ailing GOP's best chance for a comeback next year. Republican congressman Mike Pence of Indiana refers to the Rangel tax hike as "the Democrats' gift that just keeps giving." Then he adds: "The liberals in that party just can't control themselves. They keep proposing one new tax after another."

He's right, and some Democrats are fuming privately that the party continues to adopt the Mondale strategy of pledging to raise taxes, which won Fritz exactly one state (plus the District of Columbia) in 1984. The 2008 presidential election will be much more competitive. But if Republicans eke out a victory, they may have to thank all those Democrats who became "unafraid" to raise taxes. ♦

Due Process for Jihadists?

The Supreme Court ponders the constitutional rights of enemy combatants. BY ANDREW C. MCCARTHY

"Isn't the main issue," Justice John Paul Stevens plaintively asked, "the fact that it has taken six years" to resolve the question whether alien enemy combatants "have been unlawfully detained" at Guantánamo Bay?

For the Supreme Court hearing arguments last week in *Boumediene* v. *Bush*, that should not even be a relevant issue. (Lakmar Boumediene is an Algerian who emigrated to Bosnia in the 1990s. He was arrested for plotting to attack the U.S. embassy in Sarajevo and turned over to the U.S military.) If it is lawful to imprison captured enemy operatives without trial until the end of hostilities, as it has been for centuries under the laws of war, then it should not matter how long they've been held. Thus did Solicitor General Paul Clement gamely counter that emphasizing the six-year delay serves only to "cloud the basic constitutional question before this Court."

> Congress has designed an adequate procedure for testing the fairness of detention, so there should be no need to confront the more vexing issue of constitutional limits on the harshness with which government may treat the enemy during hostilities.

Yet, for most of the morning it was difficult to remember what that issue was. Not for want of skilled lawyering; Clement and his adversary, former (Clinton administration) Solicitor General Seth Waxman, gifted advocates, were at the top of their very considerable games. No, the problem is that the basic question is too bracing: Does the Constitution of the United States afford any due process for alien jihadists even as they conduct a terror war against Americans?

Waxman is far too clever to claim that the Framers somehow designed a Constitution which entitles enemies of the American people to use the courts of the American people as a weapon of their war against the American people: that the judiciary is not a governmental component of a nation at war but rather an impartial supra-tribunal whose only allegiance is to "the law." So the combatants' side resisted couching their claim as an entitlement of the enemy.

We were instead serenaded with a song of our constitutional commitment to that holiest of rhetorical holies, the rule of law. Even in the midst of hostilities, Waxman maintained, there can be no "law-free zones." Not at Gitmo, and not, as Chief Justice John Roberts's piercing questions teased out of Waxman's euphonious sound-bite, in any place on the globe where the United States fights war and takes prisoners. To the contrary, there must always and everywhere be a judicial process for reviewing military detention: a process that is both meaningful and, Waxman stressed, *swift*—deftly pouncing on Justice Stevens's "main issue."

Andrew C. McCarthy runs the Center for Law & Counterterrorism at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which filed an amicus brief supporting the government in Boumediene *v.* Bush.

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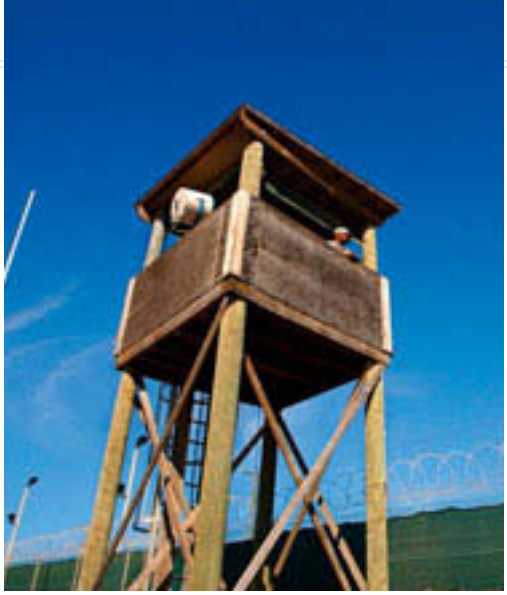
Even if one agreed, for argument's sake, that there should be such a process, however swift, that would not necessarily mean it needed to be a constitutional process. Congress has designed an adequate statutory procedure for testing the fundamental fairness of detention, so there should be no need to confront the more vexing issue of whether the Constitution imposes any limits on the harshness with which government may treat the enemy during hostilities. This, not surprisingly, was the tack that Clement took. Having had all manner of Constitution-shredding calumny laid at its feet since 9/11, the administration clearly preferred to gear its oral argument toward how much, in reality, has been done *for* the combatants. How much, in theory, could be done *to* them is better left for the brief to explain.

The solicitor general had a very good case. Let's leave aside that in *Johnson* v. *Eisentrager* (1950) the Supreme Court flatly held that the Constitution does not vest foreign enemies with the right to habeas corpus—i.e., to challenge their military detention before the civilian courts. Let's instead compare what Congress has wrought (with the 2005 Detainee Treatment Act and the 2006 Military Commissions Act) and "the base line" of 1789, when the Constitution enshrined habeas rights for Americans.

Clement recounted that in the late 18th century, alien combatants faced three insuperable hurdles in front of the courthouse door: (a) the jurisdiction of the federal courts did not extend outside U.S. territory; (b) the judicial writ was simply unavailable to belligerents because taking prisoners of war was deemed a political act of the sovereign, not a legal question for the courts; and (c) judges were required by separation-of-powers principles to accept the executive branch's determination of combatant status.

Now, by contrast, combatants are given systematic judicial reviews in the civilian courts despite being held in a location, Guantánamo Bay, that the political branches have reaffirmed is not part of sovereign U.S. territory. That civilian review comes after a combatant status review tribunal modeled on Army regulations for the treatment of honorable combatants (not terrorists)—except to the extent the tribunal is *more solicitous* of the welfare of Gitmo detainees, affording them rights to a personal representative and an unclassified summary of the factual basis for detention. In a close case, the executive is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, but the court may invalidate combatant status if it is not supported by a preponderance of the evidence. That, moreover, is in addition to its review of the military's fidelity to its own tribunal regulations and of whether those regulations pass muster under the Constitution and other federal law.



A guard tower overlooking an exercise yard for detainees, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JON SOUCY

The permissible scope of this review provided the day's most intriguing exchanges. Court watchers widely assume that the conservative and liberal blocs are split four on each side, and that Justice Anthony Kennedy's vote will be decisive, as it was when the justices held, in the 2004 *Rasul* case, that combatants had statutory habeas rights—rights Congress subsequently narrowed. In the course of Clement's argument, Justice Stephen Breyer adduced the solicitor general's admission that, broad as it may be, the judicial review prescribed by the Detainee Treatment Act does not permit combatants to lodge every conceivable claim against their detention; they are limited to challenging the validity of the combatant status tribunal procedures. So, Justice David Souter surmised, that must mean they are foreclosed from arguing that the concept of "unlawful enemy combatant," the gravamen of any detention finding, is too broad? No, Clement responded, they most certainly can "raise a constitutional claim that the definition is broader than constitutionally could be enforced." Kennedy, pleasantly surprised, interjected: He had not realized, during the solicitor general's joust with Breyer, that Clement had made this concession.

It is a weighty point. In the Military Commissions Act, Congress defined *unlawful enemy combatant* expansively. The term includes not only al Qaeda, the Taliban, and "any international terrorist organization, or associated forces" engaged in hostilities against the United States and its allies, but also any person the executive determines has "supported" those hostilities. While obviously justifiable in cases where *support* involves a knowing, material contribution to jihadist warfare, this definition could potentially stretch indefinite detention in a worrisome way—especially for judges wedded to traditional notions of "combatant" and "battlefield" that terrorist savagery has rendered passé. Clement, however, was emphatic: The D.C. Circuit "absolutely" has jurisdiction to consider whether Congress has too loosely defined the enemy.

Whether that will satisfy Kennedy remains to be seen. Plainly, six years have changed a lot of perspectives, even though that doesn't (or, at least, shouldn't) change the Constitution. Getting down to originalist basics, Justice Antonin Scalia pressed Waxman, "Do you have a single case in the 220 years of our country or, for that matter in the 500—the five centuries of the English empire in which habeas was granted to an alien in a territory that was not under the sovereign control of either the United States or England?" The issue might have been that simple on September 11, 2001. It no longer is. ♦

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Senators Trent Lott, Jon Kyl, and John Ensign

CARRIE DEVORAH / WENN

The Quiet Rise of Jon Kyl

How the junior senator from Arizona became a party leader in the Senate. BY FRED BARNES

When Senator Jon Kyl of Arizona learned on the Sunday after Thanksgiving that Senate Republican whip Trent Lott would announce his retirement the next day, he moved swiftly. It was mid-afternoon. By the end of the evening, he had 20 of the 25 votes needed to succeed Lott as the number two Republican in the Senate. And that was just by making phone calls from his home in Phoenix.

By midday Monday, Kyl had locked up a solid majority of Republican senators. Twenty-four hours later, his chief rival for the whip post, Senator Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, backed out of the race. Alexander had to settle for succeeding Kyl as chairman of the Senate Republican conference. And last week, Kyl was formally elected whip. The media labeled him the "consensus" choice.

But calling Kyl the winner by consensus doesn't quite capture what happened. By acting unobtrusively but decisively, Kyl created a consensus rather than waiting for the possibility that it might form on its own. This is the way Kyl, 65, has worked since he was elected to the House in 1986, then the Senate in 1994, and he has done so with remarkable effectiveness.

Last year, *Time* picked Kyl as one of the 10 best senators and called him "The Operator." True enough. But Kyl is not an operator in the Lyndon Johnson or Bill Clinton sense. He is not a pragmatist in search of compromise or popular applause. Kyl is a conservative—probably the smartest one in the Senate—in search of conservative victories.

The contrast between Kyl and his Arizona colleague, John McCain, is instructive. McCain is a public senator. His influence comes from taking on issues with maximum media attention and building public support for his position. Kyl is a private senator. He maneuvers skillfully out of public view to build Senate support for his positions. As *Time* said, he succeeds by "subterfuge."

"You can do so much by following that practice," Kyl told me. "I have never had the need to get a lot of publicity. I've found I can be a lot more effective if I'm not in the limelight." His style fits with the whip's job, McCain's with running for president.

Kyl's father, John Kyl, was a Republican congressman from Iowa who was squeezed out of office in 1972 when the state lost a House seat in a reapportionment. The younger Kyl never pursued a political career in Iowa. After high school, he became ill with pneumonia and moved to Arizona for the climate. He stayed for college and law school.

Oddly enough, his model in Congress is not his father. But his father, Kyl says, gave him one great piece of advice. When getting ready to vote, pick out a Republican you trust who's voting the other way and ask him why. "It didn't take me long to pick Dick Cheney." Vice President Cheney was then the House Republican whip.

Cheney was a "thoughtful, responsible, moderate sort of person" who worked behind the scenes and rarely with great fanfare, Kyl says. Today, he and Cheney, more conservative now, are close friends and political allies, agreeing particularly on national security.

What Kyl calls "my greatest legislative achievement" was the result of his no-press-conferences style. It was the defeat in 1999 of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). When President Clinton submitted the treaty to the Senate in 1997, Kyl says he "could see the handwriting on the wall." The treaty was going to be ratified.

While Jesse Helms, chairman of

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the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, kept the measure from reaching the floor, Kyl studied the details of the treaty, assembled a group of experts opposed to it, and took them to meet with individual senators. This went on for months.

When he had the 34 votes required to defeat ratification, he asked Helms to allow a floor vote. Helms told Kyl to line up more votes, which he did. Meanwhile, Clinton and Democrats were clamoring for a vote. Democratic senator Byron Dorgan finally threatened "to plant myself on the floor like a potted plant" until a vote was scheduled. Lott, then Senate majority leader, said yes. We'll vote next week.

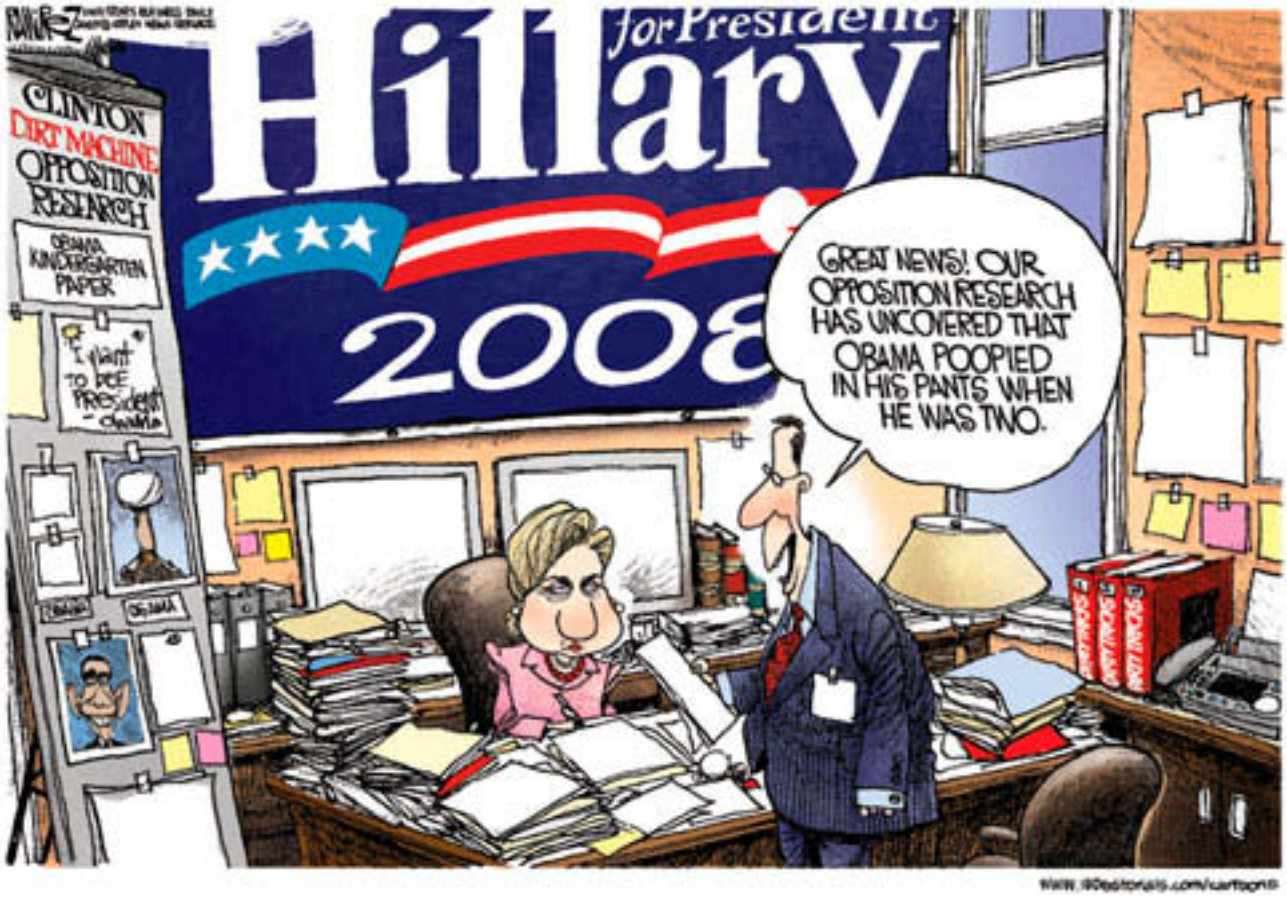
To their surprise, Democrats discovered they lacked the votes for passage. Kyl, operating inconspicuously, had outfoxed them. Desperate, Clinton called Lott and begged him to call off the vote. Lott was reluctant to dismiss Clinton's plea out of hand. He summoned Kyl and the late Senator Paul Coverdell of Georgia, one of Lott's chief advisers, to his office. Kyl made the case for killing the CTBT. "Jon's right," Coverdell said. The Senate shot down the treaty, 51-48. Kyl had single-handedly put together a majority against it.

Kyl has become a major force on three issues of particular concern to conservatives: foreign policy, defense, and the judiciary. As the leading expert on missile defense in Congress, he has impeded efforts by Democrats to slash spending and limit or prevent tests of antimissile systems.

Kyl has become a major force on three issues of particular concern to conservatives: foreign policy, defense, and the judiciary. As the leading expert on missile defense in Congress, he has impeded efforts by Democrats to slash spending and thus limit or prevent tests of antimissile systems.

In the Senate, Kyl's reputation has been as a policy wonk perfect for running the Republican conference. That job involves turning policy ideas into appealing political messages. Kyl has never been known for playing hardball politics. Nonetheless, he won reelection last year, 53 percent to 44 percent, against a strong Democratic tide and against a candidate who spent more than $10.9 million of his own money on his campaign.

One more thing: the kinder, gentler (and smarter) side of Jon Kyl. Though a leading conservative, Kyl has never become a lightning rod for attacks by liberals and leftists. This is not an accident. "I have made an effort not to be partisan in an in-your-face sense," he says. "Ordinarily I don't talk about Republicans and Democrats. I talk about ideas." Smart. ♦



MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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Who Speaks for Iraqi Shiites?

Not Iran's ayatollahs.

BY NATHANIEL RABKIN

"Shiites are mostly always loyal to Iran and not the countries where they live." So said Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak in a televised interview in April 2006. In December 2004, Jordan's King Abdullah warned that a new, Shia-dominated Iraq would become part of a "Shiite crescent," extending from Iran to Lebanon, presumably under the firm grip of Iran's "supreme leader," Ali Khamenei. Many Western analysts shared these views, and commented that while America had liberated the country from Saddam's dictatorship, Tehran would prove the real power broker in the new Iraq. A minority of analysts (Reuel Marc Gerecht in these pages among them) rejected this view. They argued that an independent Shiite religious leadership would flourish in Iraq, and ultimately come to challenge Khamenei's power over Shiites across the region, even in Iran itself.

So far, the minority view is prevailing, as the leaders of Iraqi Shiism have asserted their independence from Iranian authority. The reemergence of Iraq's Shiite leadership comes as the Iranian regime, having dropped all but the thinnest pretense of democracy, now stands only on the religious claims of authority made by Ali Khamenei. And there are indications that many Iranians reject these claims.

The independence of the four great Shiite ayatollahs of Najaf—the city 100 miles south of Baghdad that is a holy site for Shia Islam—can be easily ascertained from their public statements. Each of these ayatollahs maintains an extensive website, usually in Arabic and Persian, although some maintain sites in English, Urdu, and other languages as well. (The content appearing in one language does not always appear in another. All quotations in this article come from the Arabic websites, unless otherwise noted.) Each website has an extensive question and answer section, dealing with all kinds of religious questions, including those with political implications. Each ayatollah, responding to his followers' questions in carefully couched and diplomatic language, rejects or casts severe doubts on the religious authority of Ali Khamenei.

The ayatollah most open about his rejection of Khamenei is Ishaq al-Fayadh, who writes at www.alfayadh.com, in response to a question about the relationship between religion and politics, that no true Islamic government "exists today on any part of the earth." He adds that the policies pursued by the existing governments of the world "have no connection to religion." Elsewhere, he recommends elections as the best way of selecting good rulers.

On the website of Ayatollah Said al-Hakim (istefta.alhakeem.com), readers pose a number of questions about *Wilayat al-Faqih* (literally, rule of the jurist). This is the doctrine, favored by Khomeini, according to which a Shiite religious scholar should exercise supreme political power, under the title of Wali al-Faqih. Hakim explains that the concept is "subject to disputes among scholars." One reader asks: "If I follow a religious authority who does not believe in Wilayat al-Faqih, must I still obey the Wali al-Faqih?" Hakim responds: "Wilayat al-Faqih is a technical issue, and, as in all technical issues, each individual should follow the fatwas of his own legitimate jurist." On Hakim's English website (english.alhakeem.com), this ruling ends with the additional clause, "whether this jurist believes in the issue of Wilayat al-Faqih or does not." In Iran, denying the doctrine of Wilayat al-Faqih can result in a jail sentence or worse.

Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafy accepts Wilayat al-Faqih, but has a different version of it than the Iranians. According to Najafy (www.alnajafy.com), Khamenei can claim political authority only over territory he actually controls, and "his hand is extended only over Iran. . . . I don't think anyone believes that his dominion covers the entire earth." Asked explicitly whether he considers himself subordinate to Khamenei's religious authority, Ayatollah Najafy writes: "the rulings of one scholar cannot bind another."

The most cautious of Iraq's ayatollahs in dealing with this question is also the greatest: Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani. He has good reason to be cautious in his political statements: His agents collect millions of dollars in donations from believers in Iran, and his institutions spend millions on charitable and educational projects in that country. Asked on his website (www.sistani.org), "What is your opinion about Wilayat al-Faqih?" Sistani writes that a legal scholar may exercise political power under certain "circumstances," but that he "must meet a number of conditions, including being generally acceptable to the mass of believers." It is left up to the reader to decide whether Ali Khamenei, famous for barring opposition election candidates and imprisoning critics, is "generally acceptable" to Iran's Shiite believers.

These four ayatollahs enjoy immense support among Iraq's Shiites. They face some competition from the followers of the renegade junior cleric Moktada al-Sadr, but the latter's movement is in utter disarray and in recent months has proved unable to respond to a harsh crackdown by government authorities. When Sadr's spokesmen still dare to show their faces, they often as not call their opponents Iranian agents or simply "Persians."

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This favorite insult of the Sadrists reveals a basic truth: The Iranian government is not popular among Iraqi Shiites. There is not a single political party or religious authority in Iraq that openly accepts the political or religious authority of Ali Khamenei. Even the "Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq," an exile party that many observers in 2003 considered an Iranian front group, has changed its name to the "Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council." Its website features prominent pictures of the four Iraqi ayatollahs, but none of Khamenei or any other Iranian cleric. The group's rallies are said to feature loud chants of loyalty to Sistani, whom they refer to as "the crown of our heads."

It is difficult to say how much influence the ayatollahs have over political events in Iraq, although the stream of political leaders seeking meetings with them suggests that it is considerable. And while all of the ayatollahs have endorsed elections, it is not clear what they want Iraq to look like in the future or what role they wish to play in the country's politics.

What is clear is this: In the contest for religious supremacy in Iraq, the votes are in—Sistani and the other Najaf ayatollahs have won; Khamenei and the Iranians have lost.

The contest in Iran is somewhat harder to evaluate. There seminary students can be denied stipends or arrested for questioning Khamenei's right to rule. The official media impose a near-total blackout on clerics considered disloyal to the regime. But some information can still be gleaned about the relative popularity of Shiite clerics in Iran, according to Mehdi Khalaji, a doctoral candidate at the Sorbonne and former BBC reporter who spent 14 years studying at Iran's Qom seminary.

In his monograph *The Last Marja*, published by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Khalaji reveals a fascinating investigation carried out annually by the Iranian government on just this question.

The manner of the investigation is simple, but can only be understood in its religious context. That context is the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca of about a million Muslims, both Sunni and Shiite. Spots on the pilgrimage are given out by lottery. Hajj pilgrims travel in organized groups, and each group has one or more administrative leaders who arrange for the physical and spiritual needs of the pilgrims under their care.

For Shiite pilgrims, these needs are also educational: In order for his pilgrimage to be valid, each pilgrim must carry out the rituals of the Hajj in accordance with the instructions of the scholar he accepts as his Marja, or personal religious authority. The leader of each Hajj group asks his pilgrims individually which scholar they view as their authority, and gives him or her a short booklet, printed by that scholar's office, explaining how to perform the Hajj.

The differences between religious authorities on the Hajj are technical, if not arcane. But by surveying Hajj leaders, Iranian authorities can get a very accurate picture of how many followers each religious authority has inside Iran. According to Khalaji, the surprising results of these surveys have been widely discussed in Iranian clerical circles: By far the most popular religious authority among Iranian Shiites is Ali Sistani. The second most popular is Hossein Ali Montazeri, a leader of the 1979 revolution who spent six years under house arrest after he publicly stated in the fall of 1997 that Khamenei is not qualified to give a fatwa.

In 2003, many expected Iraq's Shiite population to fall under the shadow of Iran's clerical government. But the opposite has happened. Far from handing the country over to Iran's rulers, the liberation of Iraq has created an independent Shiite religious leadership that provides genuine competition to Iran's turbaned dictatorship. The star of Najaf is rising, and it can be seen clearly in the skies of Tehran. ♦

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Mike Murphy

Murphy knows campaigns and elections. He's handled strategy and advertising for 26 successful senatorial and gubernatorial campaigns. He served as senior strategist for McCain's presidential campaign in 2000 and also for Schwarzenegger's victorious gubernatorial campaign in 2003. Murphy appears often on NBC's *Meet the Press,* offering his analysis of the presidential race.

Ted Olson

Olson, who came to Washington to work in the Reagan Justice Department, represented George W. Bush and Richard Cheney in the *Bush v. Gore* cases stemming from the 2000 presidential elections. In 2001 he was appointed Solicitor General. William Safire has called Olson "this generation's most persuasive advocate." In his spare time, he is advising the Giuliani campaign.

John Podhoretz

Podhoretz was recently named editorial director of *Commentary* magazine. In 1995 he helped launch *THE WEEKLY STANDARD.* Today he is our movie critic. He is the author of *Bush Country: How Dubya Became a Great President While Driving Liberals Insane* and, most recently, *Can She Be Stopped?: Hillary Clinton Will Be the Next President of the United States Unless . . . .* John will tell us what comes after "Unless"!

the weekly Standard

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THOMAS FLUHARTY

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Saint Barack of Iowa

The Democratic contest comes down to Hope versus Muscle

By Stephen F. Hayes

Des Moines, Iowa

At 10:15 P.M. last Tuesday night, Barack Obama was gazing vacantly out the window of a gold Chevy Tahoe as it moved deliberately through the sleet to the Sheraton Hotel in Iowa City. When the large SUV came to a stop in front of the hotel, Obama, wearing just slacks and a white oxford despite the sub-freezing temperature, slowly opened his door and looked at the sliding glass doors some 20 feet away. The expression on his face suggested he was pondering a very serious question: How am I going to find the energy to make it to my room?

But he did it. And as he made his way through the lobby, willing one foot in front of the other, he even summoned enough strength for a wave to the three people working at the front desk. "How's it going, guys?" he said, not worried that one of those he was addressing was a woman. Obama's Secret Service detail held the elevator for him and moments later he was gone.

It was quite a contrast. Just 30 minutes earlier, Obama was standing below a two-story American flag hanging from the jogging track at the University of Iowa Field House. Thousands of young people surrounded him as he explained why he should be president of the United States. They interrupted him more than a dozen times with enthusiastic applause. He had energy to spare and delivered a lively and animated performance.

"I don't want to talk about fear," he bellowed into a handheld microphone, gesturing with an authority that matched his outrage. "I want to talk about the future. Fear of terrorism, fear of immigration, fear of gay people—we don't need a politics of fear, we need a politics of hope."

He had said these same things three hours earlier at a rally on the campus of Grinnell College. Before Grinnell, he had participated in a two-hour debate on National Public Radio. And before that, he gave an interview to the staff of the *Des Moines Register*. Before it all, he had talked to his strategists about how he would spend the four weeks that remain before the Iowa caucuses on January 3, 2008. He's been doing this—or some version of it—for more than 10 months. But as he stood under the bright lights at the University of Iowa, he gave no hint that he was as exhausted as he would appear when he finally made it to his hotel.

If Barack Obama is to have any chance at winning the Democratic nomination for president, he must beat Hillary Clinton in Iowa. That is not an insight. Everyone from Obama's wife ("Iowa will make the difference. If Barack doesn't win Iowa, it is just a dream") to Karl Rove ("Iowa is your chance to best her. If you do not do it there, odds are you never will anywhere") has noted this.

And no one understands this better than Clinton herself. Two weeks ago, she hired 100 new staffers in the state. Then last week she unleashed a torrent of harsh attacks on Obama and oddly announced to voters that she would enjoy getting nasty. "I have been for months on the receiving end of rather consistent attacks," she said. "Well now the fun part starts."

When a reporter asked if she was suggesting that Obama has character problems, she responded: "It's beginning to look a lot like that."

Frontrunners do not typically launch direct attacks. But Hillary Clinton is no longer the Democratic frontrunner, at least in Iowa. A *Des Moines Register* Iowa Poll of likely Democratic caucus goers taken in late November found that 28 percent favored Obama, 25 percent Clinton, and 23 percent John Edwards.

Obama is picking up steam in other important early states. Two polls in New Hampshire show him gaining on Clinton. And two recent surveys in South Carolina have Clinton leading Obama by just two percentage points. National polls still show Clinton with bigger leads—dou-

Stephen F. Hayes, a senior writer at The Weekly Standard, *is the author of* Cheney: The Untold Story of America's Most Powerful and Controversial Vice President *(HarperCollins).*

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Obama and a supporter during a campaign stop in Muscatine, Iowa

KEITH BEDFORD / REUTERS / CORBIS

ble-digit—but the growing Obama momentum appears there, too.

The bottom line one month before the Iowa caucuses is this: Hillary Clinton's victory was inevitable as long as it seemed inevitable. It is no longer inevitable. And no one has gained from this new reality as much as Barack Obama.

Barack Hussein Obama was born in Hawaii in 1961, to a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas. They separated when Obama was two and Obama's father eventually returned to Kenya. His mother later married an Indonesian man and pursued an academic interest in anthropology, moving to Indonesia with her son. At ten, he returned to Hawaii and lived with his maternal grandparents. He attended college, first at Occidental College and later at Columbia University.

Obama moved to Chicago where, as he's fond of noting in his campaign speeches, he began his dedication to community and public service by working for $12,000 a year (plus car expenses) to help displaced steelworkers on the city's South Side. After three years, he enrolled at Harvard Law School, where he went on to serve as the first black president of the Law Review.

Obama returned to Chicago to practice law and teach constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He also began writing the memoir that became *Dreams from My Father*, a critically acclaimed examination of his ancestry, his early life (including teenage drug use), and the role of race in America. In 1996, Obama was elected to the Illinois State Senate, and, in 2004, to the U.S. Senate. Most Americans first came to know him during that year when, as a candidate virtually assured of becoming the third black American elected to the Senate since Reconstruction, he was invited to give the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention.

Even in this hyperpartisan setting, Obama sought words that would place him above the back-and-forth sniping of left and right.

> Even as we speak, there are those who are preparing to divide us—the spin masters, the negative ad peddlers who embrace the politics of "anything goes." Well, I say to them tonight, there is not a liberal America and a conservative America—there is the United States of America. There is not a Black America and a White America and Latino America and Asian America—there's the United States of America.

He took his shots at Republicans and praised John

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Kerry, but those passages were short and quickly forgotten. Even his partisan comments did not sound partisan. The 17-minute speech showcased a young man who was poised, but not slick; confident, but not cocky; opinionated, but not dogmatic; and wise-seeming despite his youth. Obama overshadowed everyone who spoke from the podium that week, including Kerry. And on the floor of the convention that night, many Democrats lamented that they did not have an inspirational figure like Obama to challenge George W. Bush and the Republicans.

They do now, of course. Harris Wofford, the former Pennsylvania senator who endorsed Obama in Iowa last week, says he hasn't seen such an uplifting leader for decades. "I haven't had this kind of hope since the days of John Kennedy and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King," he says. "He's touched my soul."

This is the kind of overstatement often generated by an exciting day on the campaign trail. But Wofford is qualified to make it. He worked with the Kennedys and walked alongside King. Bill Clinton appointed him CEO of AmeriCorps, and Wofford helped Hillary Clinton craft her failed national health care plan.

The themes Obama laid out in his convention speech still feature prominently in his campaign rhetoric. In fact several lines were repeated verbatim in the stump speech he was delivering during the middle of last week. It was College Week, as Obama participated in town halls at two Iowa schools and gave speeches at four others.

At each stop, he began his remarks with process. He thanked his precinct captains, often by name, and then provided a thorough tutorial on the Iowa caucuses. (He uses an index card to make sure he gets names right but otherwise speaks without notes.) At the University of Iowa, he joked that students would not have anything better to do on January 3 as their Hawkeyes will not be playing in a bowl game that night.

Obama's message of idealism naturally appeals to younger voters, and his looks—a cross between Denzel Washington and Alfred E. Neuman—make him look like one of them. But there is a problem with his popularity amongst this age group. Students will be away on winter break during the caucuses. At each stop, he tells them to caucus in their Iowa hometowns or if they are from out of state to come back. Although the latter request often elicited laughter, it's clear people are taking him seriously. "I'm coming back to caucus," says Zoe Sigman, a freshman at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa. Sigman, whose dark hair features prominent blonde streaks and who wears black fingernail polish, says that she will drive the four hours from Chicago back to campus to support Obama. And she insists that many out-of-state students will do the same.

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When Obama finally turns to substance, he speaks with an authority his limited experience would suggest he hasn't earned. It doesn't matter. He sounds like a man who knows what he's talking about and knows what he wants to do. There are no questions that catch him off guard, no issues he hasn't considered. His answers almost always include precisely the right mix of policy wonkery ("I know enough to be your president") and small talk ("I'm cool enough to be your friend").

When a student at Cornell asks him for his views on the value of a liberal arts education, Obama starts with a joke (I went to a liberal arts college and look at me now) and then spends several minutes on the pedagogical advantages of the liberal arts. He finishes where he started. "So, right on with a liberal arts education," he says, with a mock fist pump to accentuate "right on." The students look at one another and nod their heads with approval.

And later, at Wartburg College, a young boy, perhaps seven or eight years old, asks: "How are you going to stop, like, immigration and all that stuff that's happening right now?"

> You know what? I'm going to talk about immigration and I'm going to talk about all that stuff. [*Laughter*] Because those two things aren't always the same. We have a real problem with immigration in this country. The fact of the matter is, since George Bush took office, 3.5 million undocumented workers came into this country. 3.5 million! We have—it's estimated, but we have 12 million illegal workers in the country.
>
> Now, how we solve that problem? Number one: We have to have stronger border security. That primarily doesn't mean physical barriers—we're not going to build a wall along the 2,700-mile border. But what it does mean is we have to have patrols, we have to have surveillance. We're putting more money into patrolling our borders. That's point number one. And by the way, we also have to control the 40 percent of immigrants who come in legally and overstay their visas. Which means we have to monitor that more effectively.

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Number two: The most important thing we can do to discourage illegal immigration is to crack down on employers who are hiring these folks [*applause*] hiring folks because they don't want to pay American workers what it takes to get them working. I don't blame the worker from Mexico who's making two dollars a day for coming here and trying to make $5 an hour. Look, if Canada paid $100 an hour, I'll bet there would be a whole bunch of folks who were flooding over the border in the other direction. But the employer—what they're doing is they're undercutting American labor. And oftentimes they're motivated by greed. They don't want to pay the minimum wage, they don't want to observe worker safety laws, they don't want unions. And we have to take that seriously. During the course of the Bush administration, when you average it out, you were more likely to be struck by lightning than to be prosecuted for hiring undocumented workers. And that's not fair. And so we've got to have a system where we are placing big penalties on employers and creating a tamper-proof system to verify someone's employment status.

Now, here's the third step, which may be controversial. It is controversial. This is where "the stuff" comes in. What are we going to do with the 12 million people who are here? The politics of fear says we're going to wrap them up, no amnesty, throw them back. But you know what? That's just talk. That's just talk that doesn't solve problems. For us to round up every single undocumented worker in the country we'd have to devote every single law enforcement resource we have. It'd probably cost us billions of dollars in additional resources. We'd have to stop prosecuting regular crimes like auto theft or burglary. Because the only thing police would be doing would be rounding up people. The only thing we'd be using our jails for would be locking up people. Farm workers, factory workers, busboys at restaurants—you know, who pose such a severe threat to public safety. So when people say "Deport 'em," they're not being honest! They're trying to gain a political advantage. That's what they're trying to do. Once we have strong border security and serious employer sanctions, then we've got to get those 12 million people out of the shadows and that means giving them a pathway to legalization. It means—they've broken the law. They've broken the law. So they should be punished. You're going to pay a significant fine. You're going to learn English. You're going to go to the back of the line and cannot get citizenship before people who have been waiting legally to get into this country. But if you do all those things then you've got a possibility of becoming a legal resident and ultimately a citizen of this country. That means you can't undermine U.S. workers anymore because now you're subject to minimum wage laws, you're subject to worker safety laws, and you're subject to the ability to unionize. And if we do those things we will have a nation of laws and a nation of immigrants and those are both traditions of ours. And we don't have to betray either of those traditions.

It is a revealing answer, for while Obama eventually settles on the mainstream liberal position—path to citizenship, crack down on employers, don't punish the workers—he does so only after acknowledging (and in some cases, embracing) the concerns of conservatives. He begins by criticizing George W. Bush on immigration from the right and says that his first priority in ending illegal immigration would be securing the borders. (Ask John McCain if it's important to list border security first when detailing your solution.)

"Hillary Clinton is running from the center," says Dennis Goldford, a Drake University political scientist. "John Edwards is running from the left. And Obama is running from above. He wants to be above politics."

This is the Obama trick, and it explains why, despite his very liberal voting record in the Senate (and in the Illinois Senate before that), he is not viewed as a left-wing ideologue. When a student asks Obama for his views on the Second Amendment, he reminds his audience that he taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago and is thus familiar with the arguments regarding the right to bear arms. He acknowledges "a tradition of gun ownership in this country that can be respected," and says that his academic studies convinced him gun ownership "is an individual right and not just the right of a militia."

But he was not finished. "Like all rights, though, they are constrained by the needs and the rights of the community." Obama then spoke of 34 students who were killed on the streets of Chicago and called for sensible gun control to prevent senseless death. He speaks of the importance of parental involvement in education before listing the many ways in which he would expand the role of the federal government in the schools.

At Cornell College, Obama spoke of personal responsibility before unveiling a series of New Deal-lite programs to address the "nation's most pressing challenges." He said: "FDR not only enlisted Americans to create employment, he targeted that service to build our infrastructure and conserve our environment. JFK not only called on a new generation, he made their service a bridge to the developing world, and a bright light of American values in the darkest days of the Cold War."

Obama plans to expand AmeriCorps from 75,000 to 250,000, and double the size of the Peace Corps. How would we solve problems in education? A Classroom Corps, of course. And what about the environment? Energy Corps. What will old people do? Senior Corps. And how will people know about all of these opportunities to get paid for volunteering? "We'll expand USA Freedom Corps . . ."

And all of that came before Obama came to the second thing he'll do: "invest in ideas that can help us meet our common challenges." How? A "Social Investment Fund

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Obama supporters will tell you that their man has been building an impressive ("unprecedented" is a favorite word) ground operation.

DAVID LIENEMANN / GETTY IMAGES

Network." What else? An "American Opportunity Tax Credit" and a "Green Job Corps."

Obama often seems to favor more government, even if his own campaign proposals do not reflect it. If his health care plan is not quite Canadian, that is much more a matter of practicality than desire. "If you're starting from scratch," he told the *New Yorker*'s Larissa MacFarquhar, "then a single-payer system would probably make sense. But we've got all these legacy systems in place, and managing the transition, as well as adjusting the culture to a different system, would be difficult to pull off."

Later, when she asked for an example of an issue on which he had changed his mind, Obama said, "I'm probably more humble now about the speed with which government programs can solve every problem." So the issue is not one of effectiveness, but efficiency. Government can solve every problem, just not quickly. Perhaps sensing his overstatement, Obama tried to recover with a conservative-sounding non sequitur. "For example, I think the impact of parents and communities is at least as significant as the amount of money that's put into education."

The most striking thing about Obama on the campaign trail is how little time he spends discussing national security issues. He acknowledges, characteristically, that we are at war, but then does little to explain how he proposes to win. We will withdraw from Iraq in 16 months, he promises, and fight al Qaeda in Afghanistan. What if al Qaeda remains in Iraq? Aside from a "strike force" ready to take them out, we are left to wonder.

Mostly, Obama thinks America will be stronger when she is more respected, and she will be more respected when she is more engaged. (He does not explain the simultaneous growth of al Qaeda and multilateralism in the 1990s.) To that end, he boasts that he plans to talk to our enemies, including Kim Jong Il and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Although Hillary Clinton criticized his position as "naive," when he first articulated it in a debate, crowds here in Iowa give him sustained applause every time he mentions it.

The other subject that gets little attention from Obama on the campaign trail is Hillary Clinton. Although the former first lady intensified her attacks on him over the past week, Obama has largely chosen to ignore her. Wofford, for one, thinks the

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attacks won't help her. "Starting an assault on each other is unfortunate. I'm sorry that she's taken that tack," he says. "It's not helpful."

He may be correct. Iowa is a state in which negative attacks rarely prove effective. And the media criticism of Clinton since she first took a more aggressive posture has been considerable.

But Clinton does have several distinct advantages going into the final weeks of the campaign in Iowa. According to a report on the *Washington Post* blog, two of the nation's largest and most active labor organizations, the AFL-CIO and AFSCME, are running ads for her in Iowa. (AFSCME plans to spend more than $1 million boosting Clinton on television.) EMILY's List, the Washington-based liberal advocacy group, is also planning extensive get-out-the-vote efforts on Clinton's behalf.

Obama supporters will tell you that their man, too, has been building an impressive ("unprecedented" is a favorite word) ground operation. Indeed, it is difficult to leave an Obama event without being assaulted by dozens of campaign volunteers shoving clipboards in your face and urging you to sign an Obama supporter card, which provides the campaign an opportunity to get you to the caucuses.

But it looks increasingly as if the Democratic contest might come down to a battle of Hope vs. Muscle. If Clinton is deploying the strength of her machine (inherited from her husband), Obama is putting his faith in hope. And Oprah. The ever-popular talk show hostess—with more than 7 million viewers daily—will be traveling to the early primary states on behalf of Obama, hoping to enlist her admirers in his cause.

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But Obama supporters believe they have a built-in advantage because of the way things happen in Iowa. The caucuses work in an unusual way. At 1,784 precincts throughout the state, Iowans gather to discuss and then select their candidates. At each site, supporters of the various candidates form groups and separate themselves from the rest of the crowd. At a designated time, participants are invited to speak on behalf of their candidate and to urge others to join.

This is crucial: A candidate must have the support of 15 percent of those gathered at that caucus in order to be considered "viable." If he does not meet that threshold, his supporters join the group of their second choice. This process continues—interrupted by mini-speeches and lots of dealmaking—until all the caucus-goers have distributed themselves to "viable" candidates. At this point there is a final headcount. (Don't ask how the state's convention delegates are ultimately chosen.) So second choices—and maybe even third—will be huge. And that should be good for Obama.

I spoke to a lawyer from Des Moines whose first choice is Dennis Kucinich. (We agreed that I would not use his name because, well, would you want your name used if you supported Dennis Kucinich?) Since Kucinich is unlikely to be viable, the lawyer's second choice will be particularly important. Right now it's among Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, and Barack Obama. The lawyer told me that he has problems with each of them. Clinton is too opportunistic, too corporate, too Washington. Edwards is too insincere. Obama is too inexperienced. Still, of the three, he prefers Obama.

Obama's inexperience is actually the flip side of a positive quality: He is fresh, and voters believe that he is more likely to bring real change to Washington than the other two senators. This, of course, is precisely what Obama wants Iowa voters to think and why he often speaks in front of a large blue banner that reads: "Change We Can Believe In." In one of his few references to Hillary Clinton on the stump—like almost all of the others, indirect—he says: "I don't want to spend the next year or the next four years refighting the same fights that we had in the 1990s."

How many Iowa voters, having chosen not to support Hillary Clinton as their first candidate, are going to choose her as their second? Dennis Goldford, from Drake, says that many Democrats see Clinton as "back to the future." And that's not good for her. "For Democrats, the common theme is change, and nobody represents change like Obama. If they've already made their decision not to support Hillary, they're much more likely to move to Obama."

And if Barack Obama wins Iowa, he may well give the major address at the Democratic National Convention this year. ♦

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Why Vladimir Putin dare not give up his position as capo

By David Satter

Moscow

Russia's parliamentary elections last week eerily imitated the one-candidate elections of the Soviet period—back when the popular attitude was exemplified by the remark of a worker who, holding a poster of Leonid Brezhnev, told a foreign correspondent, "Whatever they give me, I hold."

On December 2, United Russia, the party that listed President Vladimir Putin as its candidate, received 64 percent of the vote. This guaranteed it 315 seats in the 450-seat State Duma, more than enough to pass any legislation or amend the constitution. Another 15 percent of the vote went to two Kremlin satellite parties, the Liberal Democratic party and Just Russia. The two liberal parties, Yabloko and the Union of Right Forces, received 1 percent each, far below the 7 percent threshold needed to enter the new parliament. Of the parties that will be present in the Duma, only the Communists, with 11.6 percent of the vote, represent any sort of opposition.

The elections were marked by grave abuses. Bosses all over the country threatened to fire workers who did not vote for United Russia. There was widespread ballot stuffing and multiple voting. In Chechnya, official figures indicated that 99 percent of those eligible voted for United Russia, a claim that was greeted with amazement on the streets of Grozny. Nonetheless, even with the abuses taken into account, the illiberal vote was overwhelming. For the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian parliament will take office without a single deputy to represent the country's liberal opposition.

The illiberal and anti-Western mood in the country was reflected in the run up to the elections. In his speech at Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium on November 21, Putin referred repeatedly to internal "enemies," accusing them of being "scavenging jackals" seeking funds from foreign embassies to destabilize Russia. "Those who want to confront us," Putin said, "need a weak and ill state. They want to have a divided society so they can carry on their deeds behind its back."

Putin's remarks were echoed in the preparations made by the pro-Kremlin youth group, Nashi, to deal with any protests that might take place after the expected United Russia victory. Posters prepared in advance used a Soviet- era caricature depicting the United States as a bloated capitalist, referred to opposition figures as "traitors," and said the United States wants to return Russia to the oligarchic rule of the 1990s when the country sold its oil and gas for virtually nothing. An employee of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* who attended a meeting of Nashi posing as a member said that the group was told to occupy selected areas of Moscow where it was believed that anti-Putin demonstrators would try to protest. "Our weapons are physical dominance and moral suppression," said an instructor. "Never get into a dialogue with an instigator. As a final method, you can beat him. But try to do it carefully." How carefully is a matter of doubt because Nashi, like other pro-Kremlin youth groups, is reported to have a group of fighters who have been trained on the bases of the OMON riot police (motto: "We know no mercy and do not ask for any").

The reason for the aggressiveness is the fragility of the system put in place by Putin as he nears the end of his second term: The next presidential election is scheduled for March 2. Buoyed by an unprecedented windfall from high energy prices, the regime appears strong, but internally it is weak, and those at the top of the Russian political pyramid know this.

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Russian president Vladimir Putin in St. George's Hall during his inauguration ceremony at the Kremlin.

ALEXANDER ZEMLIANICHENK / POOL / REUTERS / CORBIS

In Russia today, property and power are monopolized by a small group of people with ties to Putin from his days in the KGB and the government of St. Petersburg. Everywhere, high-ranking officials have been put on the boards of state-owned companies creating massive conflicts of interest. First Deputy Premier Dmitri Medvedev, for example, is chairman of the board of Gazprom; Igor Sechin, deputy head of the Kremlin administration, is chairman of the Rosneft oil company; Sergei Ivanov, another first deputy premier, is chairman of the board of the United Aviation Corporation, a new aircraft industry monopoly. It is estimated that those around Putin control companies accounting for 80 percent of the capitalization of the Russian stock market.

Yeltsin-era oligarchs were allowed to keep their wealth but threatened with criminal prosecution if they showed the slightest political independence. Indeed, Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who as head of the Yukos Oil Company financed opposition political parties, is now serving an eight-year sentence in a labor camp. In this way, both economic and political power was concentrated in a single, ruling group. The internal conflicts of this group, however, were not visible to the general public.

On November 30, however, the newspaper *Kommersant* published an interview with Oleg Shvartsman, the head of the Finansgroup, a financial industrial group with ties to Sechin, in which he described how the Putin system worked. Shvartsman said that his group's assets, which were valued at $3.2 billion, included the Russian Oil Group, the Russian Diamond Group, and Russian Instrumental Technologies. The group worked under the general direction of Sechin, and its owners included companies based in offshore zones that were controlled by relatives of high-ranking members of the presidential administration as well as members of the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR).

Shvartsman described plans to develop a state corporation called "Social Investments" that would realize the concept of "velvet re-privatization" on behalf of Rosoboronexport, Russia's state arms exporter. He described this as a market form of absorbing strategic assets in regions that are dependent on state subsidies. Instead of seizing enterprises, it involved using administrative instruments, including accusations of nonpayment of taxes, to drive down the market price.

Shvartsman also spoke about a political organization called the Union of Social Justice of Russia where he is in charge of finances. He said the organization encourages businesses to fulfill their "social responsibility" by donating money for the needs of the "power ministries," including, besides the FSB and SVR, the Defense Ministry, the Emergency Situations Ministry, and the Interior Ministry. Originally, the method used was straightforward extortion. More recently, however, the organization began offering

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Russian riot police arrest a protester at a November "dissenters' march" in Moscow.

DIMA KOROTAYEV / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

partnerships to businesses. "We started to go to them with various proposals," Shvartsman said, "and these resulted in joint activities. For example, the Russian Oil Group is the result of alliances with [the oil companies] Rosneft, TNK, and Lukoil. . . . In other words, these companies gave the Russian Oil Group part of their markets."

He also spoke about plans to create a national debt-collecting agency using veterans of the Interior Ministry capable of working with minority shareholders to force out owners "who are not loyal to the government." When he was asked who initiated the creation of the agency, Shvartsman said, "The party! The party for us is the power bloc [the faction in the leadership based on the power ministries], which is led by Igor Ivanovich Sechin."

In fact, the "power bloc" is not the only faction in the Russian leadership. There is also a "liberal" faction whose leader is Medvedev. It includes many of the Yeltsin-era oligarchs. Without civil society or reliable legal institutions, however, the conflicts between these groups and the factions within them can only be resolved by the president himself.

Putin has indicated that he intends to continue to play an important political role in Russia after the end of his second term, but no one knows what that role will be. In fact, he has considerable reason to want to hand over the leadership. The suppression of the revolt in Chechnya has led to new rebellions in Ingushetiya and Dagestan. At the same time, there are signs that the economic good times in Russia may not last. The price of food is increasing sharply and is expected to rise by 50 to 70 percent in the spring. According to Stanislav Belkovsky, the head of the National Strategy Institute, this means that for families of moderate means—who make up half of the country's population—expenditures for food will soon exceed their entire budget.

Perhaps the most important reason that Putin may want to step down, however, is his desire to enjoy his massive private wealth. In an interview published November 12 in the German newspaper *Die Welt*, Belkovsky said, "The people sitting in the Kremlin are direct representatives and joint owners of large scale enterprises. Putin is also a big businessman. He controls 37 percent of the shares of Surgutneftegaz [Russia's fourth-largest oil producer] with the market value [of Putin's putative stake] coming to $20 billion. Moreover, he controls 4.5 percent of the shares of Gazprom [Russia's natural gas monopoly]. In the company Gunvor, which sells oil, Putin has [a] 50 percent [stake] through his representative Gennady Timchenko. Last year, [Gunvor's] turnover came to $40 billion and its profits $8 billion."

The system that Putin holds together, however, may not be able to withstand his voluntary surrender of office. The most ominous sign of this has come from the security services, which are the mainstay of Putin's power.

The first sign of how serious the conflicts between Kremlin factions may become was the discovery on October 27 in a St. Petersburg ditch of the bodies of Konstantin Druzenko, an officer with the Federal Narcotics Control Service (FSKN), and Sergei Lomako, a former colleague, apparently victims of poisoning. The St. Petersburg-based website Fontanka.ru quoted the police as saying that the two had been at a city café where they "partied on a grand scale," but the others at the party said the two were fine when they left them. An FSKN spokesman confirmed that the two men were poisoned and said the circumstances were "strange."

The apparent poisoning came against the backdrop of a

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conflict between the FSB and the FSKN that became public after the arrest, on October 2, of General Alexander Bulbov, the head of the FSKN's operational department, and several other FSKN officers. Bulbov was accused of bribery and illegal wiretapping. He and one of the other arrested FSKN officers had been leading the agency's investigation of Tri Kita ("Three Whales"), a Moscow furniture store accused of running a smuggling operation that evaded millions of dollars in duties on goods imported from China. Among the cofounders of the Tri Kita stores were firms belonging to the father of Yuri Zaostrovtsev, a deputy director of the FSB. Yuri Shchekochikhin, a deputy in the State Duma and deputy editor of *Novaya Gazeta* who had been investigating the Tri Kita affair, died in July 2003, another victim of an apparent poisoning. In an open letter, Bulbov charged that three FSB generals, whom he identified as Kupryazhkin, Feoktistov, and Kharitonov, were behind his arrest and that his problems with the FSB started a year ago when he began investigating the Tri Kita case.

It is all part of a larger power struggle. On October 9, the head of the FSKN, Viktor Cherkesov, wrote an article in *Kommersant* stating that the arrests were evidence of "infighting among the special services" and warning, "There can be no winners in this war. There is too much at stake." He also stated that it was impermissible for "warriors to turn into merchants," an apparent reference to the commercial activities of high ranking officers of the FSB.

Putin appears to be trying to maintain a balance between the warring sides. After Cherkesov's article appeared in *Kommersant*, Putin publicly criticized him, saying it is "wrong to bring these kinds of problems to the media." Yet the following day, Putin created a new state committee to fight illegal drugs and named Cherkesov as its chief. Unfortunately, a new leader may not be capable of this type of mediation. Under those circumstances, the possibility for violence is real. A former security service officer familiar with the circumstances surrounding the arrest of Bulbov and his fellow FSKN officers described the incident to the *Moscow Times*. "We nearly had a fight between two security agencies," he said. "This time, the agents were able to keep their cool, and there was no gunfight. But if this battle continues, you can be sure they will start shooting at each other. And it would be difficult to stop."

Given all this, there are many people in the leadership who are determined to keep Putin in power no matter what. Partly under pressure from them, Putin has given indications that he is ready to continue to exercise ultimate authority in the regime. One possibility is to use his majority in parliament to amend the constitution to allow a third consecutive term and then run again for the presidency. This would evoke a negative response internationally, but despite this and Putin's protestations that someone else will be in the Kremlin next year, it remains possible. Another possibility is that Putin will endorse a lackluster successor such as Viktor Zubkov, the present prime minister, who will then resign after a few months for health reasons, forcing new elections in which Putin could compete legally. Finally, Putin could take the job of prime minister and use his majority in parliament to pass laws that would strengthen that office. Under any circumstances, while Putin ponders his options, the internal pressures in the government can only get worse.

For half the country's families, expenditures for food will soon exceed their entire budget. Putin, however, personally controls 37 percent of the shares of Russia's fourth-largest oil producer, 4.5 percent of the shares of Russia's natural gas monopoly, and 50 percent of the oil company Gunvor.

The presidential administration is in charge of the export of seven million barrels of crude oil and oil products a day. Together with natural gas, these exports earned $190 billion last year. Each of the suggested changes at the top threatens to disrupt the informal networks that allow government officials to grow rich on the strength of this national windfall.

At the same time, uncertainty about the new distribution of power stirs ambitions on all sides. Thus, government officials besides Cherkesov have started to advance their claims publicly.

In late September, Sergei Chemizov, the head of Rosoboronexport, the arms-trading monopoly, and board chairman of the AvtoVAZ carmaker, who served with Putin in the KGB in Dresden, called for using the Stabilization Fund, set up in 2004 to protect Russia from a sudden downturn in energy prices, to provide credit for domestic industry. It has long been believed that Russian officials want to use the Stabilization Fund for their personal investment projects.

Some of the mystery about Russia's future may be cleared up on December 17 when United Russia meets to nominate its candidate for president. If it becomes clear that Putin really intends to step down, a massive and seriously destabilizing fight over assets on the part of government officials may ensue. If he stays on, he will very likely become a prisoner of his office, a president for life who cannot give up power without creating danger for himself. Either way, it is a very uncertain future that faces Russia—with the overwhelming endorsement last week of an indifferent electorate. ♦

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Instant Sex

And the sad demise of romantic love

By David Gelernter

A middle school in Portland, Maine, decided recently that it would hand out birth-control pills to girls as young as 11; no parental consent required. Strippers were invited to participate (fully clothed) in this year's "Haunted Halloween Carnival Benefit" at a New York City middle school. Complaints were received and the strippers were, reluctantly, disinvited. (For this year.) And the list goes on.

I don't have to spell out the nature of sexual conduct in the world of older children and young adults nowadays. School and college authorities who used to discourage casual sex have long since decided that they dare not seem prudish, reactionary, envious, antiquated—or (worst of all) religion-minded, an attitude that everyone knows is unconstitutional. Besides, they can't see anything wrong with the proposition. Any young person who doesn't like the instant sex world can stay on the sidelines (the thinking goes), and as for the rest—the uninhibited majority—casual sex is not expensive, not fattening, and apparently (relief!) not damaging to the young couple's carbon footprint. So what could be better? Instant Sex (if you "take precautions") is a gift of unmitigated pleasure.

But many of us know that these pleasures are dipped in poison. The moral problems are most important, and have often been discussed. Let's consider a different aspect of the same phenomenon: the ongoing slow death of romantic love, with all the horrible consequences that follow.

Instant sex and romantic love can't coexist any more than hurricanes and forest fires. One drives out the other. ("Romantic love" meaning the act of falling in love and the consequent state of mind.)

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Why can't they coexist? Because, just as green leaves transform sunlight to useful energy in a process called photosynthesis, human beings transform longing for an adored object into a heightened state of consciousness in a process called falling in love. Thwarted sexual desire is nearly as necessary to young people as food and shelter. Premarital, premature sex drains the power reserve that would have propelled them into emotional (versus mere physical) adulthood.

Nowadays many of us naively believe that falling in love and jumping into bed are independent events. You sleep with people you don't love, and admire people you don't sleep with; but certainly if you do happen to fall in love, sex ought to follow as promptly as dental work follows a toothache.

> Thwarted sexual desire is nearly as necessary to young people as food and shelter. Premarital, premature sex drains the power reserve that would have propelled them into emotional (versus mere physical) adulthood.

But this innocent, ignorant view defies a fundamental law of human nature: Keeping steady company with a person you adore plus not sleeping with her (or him) yields "being in love," which is a new state of mind that is more than the sum of its parts.

(To love someone is not the same as falling in love or being in love, or romantic love for short. We love our wives and husbands as much as ever. But being in love is a high-energy state that the mind can't possibly maintain beyond a certain time-limit without collapsing. Romantic love boosts you into orbit, burning a huge amount of psychological fuel in the process. Loving is of course just as necessary as being in love; it soothes instead of inflaming, and makes for happiness instead of ecstatic pain.)

By creating a world in which instant sex is the norm, we have made it vastly harder for young people to fall well-and-truly in love. Yet being in love is a protean state with remarkable characteristics that change the human mind forever. It underlies much of Western art, and certain aspects of religion. It is a painful but powerful state, a psychological crisis that used to be resolved (if you were lucky) by marriage—which breached the dam, released the built-up flood, and allowed a new and higher level of normality to return.

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A teenage couple in an English nightclub

PETER DENCH/CORBIS

How does one learn about this abnormal state? Merely glance at a few thousand years of Western literature.

Genesis 29, for example, tells us that Jacob fell in love with Rachel, and it was agreed that he should have her after working seven years for her father. So he worked the seven years—which "seemed to him like a few days in his love for her."

How's that again? Everyone knows this passage (or used to), but to modern minds, it can only seem bizarre. How could seven long years pass faster insofar as you are living in the same household with a beautiful girl you desperately desire but are forbidden to take to bed? Wouldn't every day be torture? And how could the ordeal be easier insofar as you and the girl are crazy about each other? Wouldn't that only make things worse? Wouldn't those seven years have passed like centuries, not days?

But Jacob was in love—an increasingly unfamiliar state. Still, we must try to understand. Otherwise we will never grasp the crime we are committing against our own children.

Another famous passage sounds even stranger. "If music be the food of love, play on," says the (admittedly histrionic) Duke Orsino at the start of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. "Give me excess of it; that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken, and so die." Once again there is a beautiful girl in the picture, the Countess Olivia—who refuses to let Orsino see or speak to her, much less touch her. But if Orsino longs desperately to have and to hold and to bed this beauty, what does music have to do with it? Music has long been considered an aphrodisiac; what Orsino needs is a cold shower. In any case, how could he possibly believe that his desire for Olivia could be satisfied (surfeited even) by music instead of by her?

But romantic love is an abnormal state of mind, a state of heightened imagination and sensitivity powered by the rich fuel of adoration plus desire, like kerosene plus liquid oxygen—rocket fuel. As Silvius explains (*As You Like It*, act 5, scene 2), to be in love "is to be all made of faith and service, . . . All made of passion, and all made of wishes, / All adoration, duty and observance, / all humbleness, all patience, and impatience." This is romantic comedy, not reality; but it rings true. James Joyce updates the file with a description of Stephen Dedalus in love (Dedalus being Joyce's own image mirrored in the bright surface of prose poetry in his *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, 1916): "Towards dawn he awoke. O what sweet music! His soul was all dewy wet. Over his limbs in sleep pale cool waves of light had passed. He lay

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still, as if his soul lay amid cool waters, conscious of faint sweet music. His mind was waking slowly to a tremulous morning knowledge."

In olden times, before the culmination of America's Revolution of the Intellectuals in the late 1960s, not everyone was lucky enough to have the experience. But many were. "They say everybody is in love once in their lives," says Jane Austen's heroine Emma, in a business-like mood.

Men and women were equally susceptible. Rosalind tells her cousin Celia (*As You Like It*, act 4, scene 1), "My pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love!" One of the loveliest lines in English. But women in love used to demand more than men did before they said yes to marriage and its consequences. When Rosalind (disguised as someone else) asks her lover Orlando (modern students are sometimes surprised to hear that "lover" did not always mean "sexual partner"), "Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possess'd her"—how long you would be faithful to your wife—she expects and requires the answer Orlando so memorably returns: "For ever and a day."

Some will dismiss this as mere romantic mythmaking and irrelevant. They should look into the attitudes of American women circa 2007. Those attitudes resemble Rosalind's far more than they do those of Simone de Beauvoir.

Of course, Rosalind wielded power over her demanding lover that no modern woman has. (And men can be demanding. "I do know, / When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul / Lends the tongue vows," Polonius tells Ophelia in ordering her to ignore her aspiring lover [*Hamlet*, act 1, scene 3].) But peer pressure used to support the girl who said no, or said "Marry me first, so I can make a safe home for our children"—not the young man and his burning blood who said "Sex first, and marriage (yawn) when I'm in the mood. Maybe." None of her girlfriends, boyfriends, or elders were telling Rosalind, "Go ahead; everybody does it." Nor could Orlando have told her, "If you won't, Celia will." And no officious busybodies were handing out birth-control pills to young girls in the Forest of Arden.

Modern feminism has driven women out of this old world into a nightmare, an upside-down Arden where men hold all the cards and women are expected to want what men want, see as men see, and do what men do. In the war between the sexes, feminism has decreed unilateral disarmament for women.

> We who now have children in high school or college are as guilty as any other party to this tragedy; perhaps guiltier. We had fun, and never thought twice about where this society was headed. Nor would we have acted differently if we had. We thought we were opening a window and letting in some fresh air. What we actually let in was more like the Black Death.

What happens when you do fall in love? What is this heightened state "of patience and impatience" good for? If you are Keats you compose odes, "lines," and sonnets to your love. ("Yourself—your soul—in pity give me all, / Withhold no atom's atom or I die.") If you are Schumann, you write the great C major Fantasia. Even Benedick in *Much Ado about Nothing* (act 5, scene 2), who is in love but "cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried," manages to fashion a "halting sonnet"—for "what love can do, that dares love attempt!" says Romeo (act 2, scene 2), and he ought to know.

If you are Stephen Dedalus you write a gorgeous villanelle with the reader looking over your shoulder. ("Are you not weary of ardent ways? / Tell no more of enchanted days.") If you are the great 20th-century American artist Joseph Cornell pining for the young Lauren Bacall, you build her a beautiful, mysterious microcosm—a "Cornell box." And if you are Orlando, you perform the quintessential act of romantic homage: You repeat your love's name wherever, whenever you can. Orlando carves "Rosalind" on tree trunks and posts her name in love poems all over the forest. Granted, he is so much in love that "neither rhyme nor reason can express how much" (act 3, scene 2); but his desire to proclaim his love's name—to "hallow your name to the reverberant hills, / And make the babbling gossip of the air cry out 'Olivia!'" (as a different lover puts it in *Twelfth Night*, act 1, scene 5)—is thoroughly normal.

But if you are no poet, composer, or artist of any kind, you nonetheless prick up your ears and open your eyes and see, think, and feel more acutely than you ever did before. (Hence Orsino-in-love hears and feels music differently than he used to.) Your reactions to art now will shape your relation to art for the rest of your life.

To be in love underlies some aspects of religion too; if you have never been in love (living as you do in this age of instant sex), there are aspects of Judaism and Christianity you will never understand. The virgin in

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love with higher things than man is a powerful symbol in Catholicism; we know that, being a virgin, she can fall in love. In Judaism the picture is different—the "holy woman" is never the virgin, always the bride; and as it happens, no woman is honored and loved by practicing Jews to this day more than Rachel herself, the bride of Jacob. Yet "being in love" is a rabbinic model for many fundamental relations—between Jews and the Sabbath, Jews and the Torah, a prophet and his God, the Jews and their God. For both Judaism and Christianity, father and son, the brief biblical book called the Song of Songs—a masterpiece of erotic Hebrew folk-poetry—has been astoundingly important. But that's another story.

I have mentioned the explosive change in consciousness that romantic love creates. Jane Austen shows us a different facet of the same phenomenon. Her novels center, mostly, on prolonged romantic love that is one-sided at first but finally wins through—Darcy's for Elizabeth Bennet (*Pride and Prejudice*), Fanny Price's for Edmund (*Mansfield Park*), Knightley's for Emma (*Emma*), Catherine Morland's for Tilney (*Northanger Abbey*), Anne Elliot's for Wentworth (*Persuasion*). Such prolonged, one-sided love is hard to endure, but eventually the spiritual forces it brings to bear are so enormous, they can actually twist a human personality into a new shape. In *Persuasion*, her last and greatest novel, Jane Austen writes of Captain Wentworth that Anne Elliot's character "was now fixed on his mind as perfection itself . . . ; but he was obliged to acknowledge that only at Uppercross had he learnt to do her justice, and only at Lyme had he begun to understand himself."

Of course the cost of romantic love runs high. "Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame" (Song of Songs 8:6). Hamlet gives "the pangs of despis'd love" (act 3, scene 1) as one good reason so many people wish they had the nerve to kill themselves. The most haunting reckoning-up might be (fittingly enough) in *Twelfth Night* (act 2, scene 4), the celebrated passage where Viola (disguised as someone else) describes to the duke her lovesick "sister"—but is actually speaking about herself. She has fallen in love with Orsino, who is still in love with Olivia, who still can't stand him. "What's her history?" Orsino asks Viola about this imaginary sister. The answer is,

> A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm I' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought,
> And with a green and yellow melanchol
> She sat like patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief.

Love is a brutal business; but you knew that already.

Finally, qualifications. Romantic love is not dead, and God willing never will be; it is merely gasping for breath. Even instant sex cannot eliminate it altogether. A couple who sleep together can still be in love. Picasso was a modern Orlando, in a way; he repeatedly wrote his girlfriend and sexual partner Eva Gouel into his Cubist paintings, by including the words "*Ma Jolie*," referring to her—"my own pretty girl"; and once he included the phrase "*J'aime Eva*." But this kind of being-in-love compares to the real thing as a candle-flame to a forest fire. It can't possibly have the volcanic intensity of presexual love because it lacks the huge power of blocked passion.

Experience suggests (fair is fair) that a few casual, premature sexual encounters at the whorehouse level, with persons you couldn't possibly love and never count on meeting again, can't do much damage to your capacity for romantic love. (I am speaking only about aesthetics and psychology, not morals.)

And of course there are dissidents nowadays, young men and women—heroes and heroines—who refuse to be part of the instant-sex world. They still have a crack at the thing itself, undiluted. But the cynical nihilism of modern life, especially on campus, is a grim, pelting rainstorm that makes it hard to light a fire and keep it going.

Will we ever get our old world back? Never. One of the first lessons the Bible teaches is that forbidden fruit once tasted can never be untasted. (And the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil"—Genesis 2:17—might well have more to do with sexual knowledge than the textual surface lets on. Consider what Adam and Eve do first as soon as they are exiled from Eden. Consider, as many commentators have pointed out, the Hebrew wordplay between *arum*, clever [as a talking snake] and *airum*, naked.) But at least those dissidents who refuse to heed the talking snake will grow in number and confidence; and we will hear from them.

Am I a hypocrite to write this piece? Back in the 1970s and early '80s, matters now taken for granted were not treated quite so casually. (Not *quite*.) So things were different. But those are weak words. We had fun, and never thought twice about where this society was headed. Nor would we have acted differently if we had. We who now have children in high school or college are as guilty as any other party to this tragedy; perhaps guiltier. We thought we were opening a window and letting in some fresh air. What we actually let in was more like the Black Death.

So we turn to the end of *Romeo and Juliet*.

> Heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.
> And I for winking at your discords too
> Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punish'd. ♦

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (1)

Whose city – whose "holy city" – is it?

It is forty years since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War in 1967 that the city of Jerusalem, which had been divided for nineteen years has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk that the "Middle East problem" cannot be solved unless the city, or at the very least its eastern part, be "returned to its rightful owners," the Muslim Arabs. In fact, this claim for Jerusalem, together with the "return" of the 1948 refugees, whose descendants have miraculously swollen to 5 million, are posited as "non-negotiable demands" in discussions with the Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces re-conquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim holy city were rarely, if ever, asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

> "Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital."

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who had never set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina – cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Muslim claim. It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and if the Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem – in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus – has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

At the center of Jewish life. But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1003 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. And the Muslim Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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Allied officers watch the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, 1919

HENRY GUTTMANN/GETTY IMAGES

Peace in Their Time

The cost of failure at Versailles BY JOHN MILTON COOPER JR.

Why do some peace settlements succeed and others fail? Except for how to win wars, there is no more important question in international relations than this one. Naturally, a great deal of attention has gone into studying and analyzing peace settlements, with the failures usually getting more attention than the successes. The three great peace settlements during the last two centuries have included two successes and one failure. The successes came at the end of the Napoleonic wars, with the work of the Congress of Vienna in 1814 and 1815, and at the end of World War II, with the division of Europe that lasted for the next four decades. The failure came at the end of World War I, with the work of the Paris peace conference. This was, in the title words of a recent symposium at the Liberty Memorial Museum in Kansas City, "The Peace That Failed," and it is the subject of this book.

A Shattered Peace
Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today
by David A. Andelman
Wiley, 336 pp., $25.95

The author has an ambitious purpose, as the subtitle implies: *Versailles 1919 and the Price We Pay Today*. "If there was a single moment when all might have been different, this was the moment: Paris, 1919," David Andelman contends. "Certainly the peace imposed at Versailles by the Western powers—Britain, France, Italy and the United States—on the vanquished, not to mention the weak, the powerless, the orphaned and the friendless, determined much of what went wrong for the balance of the century and beyond." Andelman's wish to explain the failure of this peace is commendable, but it highlights the book's most serious weakness: It does not deliver on its stated aim.

Part of the problem lies in the approach that Andelman takes. This is not a comprehensive history of the peace conference. Anyone seeking such a history should turn to Margaret

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MacMillan's *Paris, 1919* (2002). Nearly all of Andelman's book concentrates on "the weak, the powerless, the orphaned and friendless"—whom he believes should have received greater and more serious attention from the peacemakers at Paris. Chapter-by-chapter he talks about the young nationalist who did not yet call himself Ho Chi Minh and Indochina, Emir Faisal and the Arab peoples, Chaim Weizmann and a Jewish homeland in Palestine, Thomas Masaryk and Ignace Paderewski and their respective new nations of Czechoslovakia and Poland, Jan Smuts's mission to Hungary and efforts to establish links with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, various dabblings in the Balkans and the creation of what is anachronistically called Yugoslavia (it did not take that name until 1929), and V.K. Wellington Koo and efforts to defend China against Japanese expansion. If the peacemakers had handled these people and their aspirations differently, Andelman argues, the world would look different and undoubtedly much better today.

That contention is interesting and deserves more consideration. But this focus comes at the expense of what the peacemakers considered most important—namely "the vanquished," the treatment of the defeated foes, particularly Germany. The peacemakers of 1919 deserve to be judged at least in part by how they dealt with what they considered most important. Andelman almost completely neglects this aspect of peacemaking—almost, but not quite. Here are the book's last words: "For one final view of another set of issues dealt with at the peace conference and the efforts of British economist John Maynard Keynes to shape the future course of the economy of the western world, see 'Chapter 9 1/2: Setting Up a Global Economy' at www.ashatteredpeace.com."

I do not know whether the author or the publisher decided to relegate that material to a website, but shame on whoever did. Either this belongs in the book or it doesn't.

Andelman would probably respond that the problems of dealing with Germany were not as important as the future of Asia and the Arab world or the shape of central and eastern Europe. Is that really so? If Woodrow Wilson, David Lloyd George, and Georges Clemenceau had done a better job of dealing with Germany and preserving European order, the neglected areas would have risen to importance in different ways. If Germany had been reintegrated successfully into the international community, and Britain and France had enjoyed more decades to recover from the devastation of World War I, then Europe would almost certainly not have become divided as it was after World War II, decolonization might have proceeded in a more responsible way, and more than one power (ourselves) would have been capable of dealing with an expansionist Japan. If the League of Nations had been established as a stronger body with the United States fully participating, then collective security might have been not so wild a dream. These are all might-have-beens, but they suggest that the leaders in Paris in 1919 may not have been totally off the mark in picking their priorities.

An equally big shortcoming with Andelman's interpretation is that he indulges in might-have-beens of his own that are far-fetched. Would a hearing for Ho Chi Minh at Paris have insured a non-Communist path to independence in Southeast Asia? Would setting Faisal up with an Arab state that included most of the non-Turkish parts of the Ottoman Empire really have prevented the bloody conflicts that are now plaguing the Middle East? Perhaps a different posture toward the Zionists might have forestalled the creation of Israel, but Andelman does not confront this question. Perhaps Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and an expanded Poland were artificial creations, but was this primarily the doing of the men in Paris, or something they could have prevented? Could any efforts to reach out to the Bolsheviks have come to much? Andelman admits that Lenin really did not want constructive engagement with capitalist powers but sought only to manipulate them to gain advantage for revolutionary activity. Would a more vigorous defense of China at the peace conference have accomplished anything more than to push Japan faster down the path of aggression?

I readily agree with Andelman that most of these areas were not well handled at Paris, but that does not automatically mean that better treatment would have made such a huge difference.

This book does have some virtues. It is briskly paced and clearly written. Andelman likes to spice up the historical account with anecdotes from his experiences as a foreign correspondent for the *New York Times* and CBS, particularly in Asia and the Balkans. These are interesting, but also sometimes a bit distracting. For sources, he relies particularly on Harold Nicolson's diaries and memoir, *Peacemaking, 1919* (1933), which makes for lively reading, although a good deal of bias. That bias is particularly strong against Wilson and aligns this book with Godfrey Hodgson's recent biography of Colonel Edward M. House, *Woodrow Wilson's Right Hand* (2006), in portraying Wilson as an impractical, misguided idealist who could not be saved from himself by his worldly-wise, constructive adviser.

If anything, Andelman goes even further than Hodgson in this direction. For example, with regard to the Balkans, he writes, "Wilson kept his head firmly buried in the sand." But the reason for this was that the president did not want to be dragged into intrigues there by Italy and other nations. It is not necessary to admire Wilson, or even to believe that he did much better than Andelman gives him credit for; but it is necessary to take him seriously and pay attention to what he really thought and said.

Anyone who wishes to render this author's judgment that "it was Wilson who lost the peace" must draw on a lot more research to back up such a claim. Andelman gives little sign that he has delved much into primary materials beyond certain memoirs. In his bibliography (there are no notes), he mentions the volumes of *Foreign Relations of the United States* that cover the peace

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conference, but his text does not reflect much acquaintance with material there. He does not mention Arthur Link's edition of *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, which is an indispensable and easy-to-use source not only on the president but on the conference as a whole.

In sum, *A Shattered Peace* provides a diverting stroll through some aspects of peacemaking after World War I, together with quick accounts of what the author believes to be some of the consequences of that effort. Anyone who wants a comprehensive and readable account of the conference should consult MacMillan's book, and anyone who wants to learn more about the impact of Woodrow Wilson's ideas on the non-Western world should read Erez Manela's just published *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Besides being much more sophisticated in its analysis of what Andelman's book makes its main subject, Manela's work rests on extensive archival research in many countries and languages, including Arabic and Chinese.

In the end, the question remains, why was this The Peace That Failed? My own answer is a proposition that both MacMillan and I have advanced—namely, that the breakdown of this settlement depended less on the specific terms or even general direction of the Treaty of Versailles and more on the quickly demonstrated lack of will among the victors to make it stick. The more instructive contrast is not with Vienna in 1815 but with post-1945 Europe. To this day, there is no comprehensive treaty to end World War II and no treaty with Germany. Yet whatever else the Cold War did, it unquestionably nerved both sides to maintain the order that emerged from the ashes of Nazi Germany. It also rested on nuclear weapons and what Winston Churchill called the "balance of terror."

Beyond that, it rested on the hard lesson that peacemaking does not end with a conference or a treaty. That is what makes the experience of 1919 particularly worth pondering, and I regret to say that *A Shattered Peace* is not one of the better places to begin such pondering. ♦

NEWSCOM

Dust mite, up close

Scratch 'n' Sniff

When the body overreacts, all hell breaks loose.

BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

In my youth, I figured I probably had allergies. My eyes itched and my nose dripped every time I mowed the lawn. My preferred remedy was to quit mowing the lawn, but Mother would have none of that. So I would pop an over-the-counter allergy pill before pull-starting the Toro. In a serene, spacey antihistamine stupor, I pushed the mower about the yard, often in whirly patterns. A long nap on the couch followed, and upon my return to consciousness, I inevitably found our yard looking like it had the mange—tufts and clumps of grass sticking up here and there. Mother was not pleased.

Breathing Space
How Allergies Shape Our Lives and Landscapes
by Gregg Mitman
Yale, 336 pp., $30

She dragooned me to an allergist, who asked me questions, took blood, then shooed us from his office with our hands full of samples of antihistamines. A couple weeks later, we returned to the good doctor's office and were shown a printout that purported to show the dozens of things to which I was allergic: grasses, trees, mold . . . Legumes? What the devil are those, I wondered. We were informed that the best approach to my problem was "immunotherapy." Every two weeks for half a year, I was to come to the allergist's office and get shots

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loaded with increasing quantities of the substances to which I was allergic.

Once I had completed my immunization treatment, I was cured of allergies. The great outdoors was no longer a threat—until I wandered into a patch of poison ivy on a golf course (one of the perils of a persistent duck hook) which left my body swollen and itching so horribly I could not sleep. A bit of urshiol, the oil in the ivy that causes the dermatitis, had not been included in the serum. Still, provided I stayed clear of poison ivy, I was cured.

If only. Upon taking up residence in Washington, D.C., I got hay fever symptoms again. The allergens here are not the same as those in Ohio or New York. Marrying a woman who owned a cat did not help, either. Back to the pills I went.

My allergy story is not novel. As Gregg Mitman demonstrates, man has struggled haplessly against allergies for over a century. In the late 19th century, urbanism and industrialization were blamed for allergic rhinitis, more commonly known as hay fever. Cooped up in offices all day, choked in the street by smoke and made jittery by the hustle and bustle, city-dwellers were estranged from nature. Rather than address the sources of their discomfort, allergy sufferers of means simply took long holidays in the purifying country. Resort towns like Mackinac Island, Michigan, and Bethlehem, New Hampshire, sold themselves as hygienic places with "tonic" air.

In 1906, scientists invented the word "allergy," derived from the Greek terms *allos* (other) and *energia* (energy), to refer to the body's frenetic response to foreign substances. The source of our suffering rested in one of man's strengths: our ability to cleanse ourselves of alien substances. Allergies, scientists theorized, were an overreaction of the immune system, the most extreme form being the sometimes-fatal anaphylactic shock.

Despite this intellectual breakthrough, man continued to flounder in the search for relief. In 1930, Dr. Murray Peshkin, head of the Mount Sinai Hospital's Children Allergy Clinic, argued that allergens and irritants were merely the "sensitizing substances" that excited a response. The real problem lay in the nervous system of the afflicted. So Peshkin shot up allergy-suffering children with adrenalin, and when that did not do the trick, he subjected them to a "parentectomy." Sniffling kids were shipped away from their homes to live in fresh-air locales like Denver or Tucson for six months or more, free from their tension-inducing progenitors.

The quest for cures could be cruel to adults, too. Mitman relates the tale of "Poor Mr. G., [a] fifty-one-year-old bronchial asthmatic [who] had been suffering daily from severe asthma attacks for almost five years." Mr. G went to a medical facility at the University of Pennsylvania. During his treatment, he was placed in a room where an "air washer" was running. His symptoms ceased. Attendants then moved him into a room without an air washer and his suffering began anew. Not convinced that this experiment had verified the utility of the air washer, the attending physicians moved Mr. G. back into the other room. His symptoms subsided, whereupon they scattered house dust in his room, sending the poor sod into a violent fit of gasps that had to be remedied through drug injections.

American business saw the opportunities in aiding the afflicted. Vacations to posh clean-air resorts were marketed to eager sufferers, such as the well-heeled members of the United States Hay Fever Association. Industry ballyhooed to the common man air conditioning, air purifiers, vacuum cleaners, hypoallergenic pillows, and chemical fixes like Dust-Seal, which was supposed to reduce airborne dust in the home by making it stick to carpets where it had been applied.

And obviously, there were drugs: antihistamines in the form of pills and corticosteroids delivered via inhalers. If you could not escape the allergens, you could inoculate yourself against them, at least temporarily.

To a great degree, Gregg Mitman's version of the fight against allergies is a tale of futility and foolishness. As land was cleared for railroad tracks, leading to pollen-free towns, ragweed took root in the loose soil and followed. Weed-killing chemicals might have some utility in eradicating allergenic menaces like ragweed. But municipalities' habit of blasting gallons of it along their roads wreaked environmental havoc—and did nothing to address the pollens produced by the lush green lawns its citizens coaxed forth and the ornamental plants they tended.

Drugs have alleviated the suffering of millions, but have come with their costs, not least overreliance upon them, and addiction. (Witness the case of the asthmatic woman who lived with "two very heavy smokers" and did nothing to help herself beyond sucking on "an isoproterenol inhaler every few minutes.") Quite sensibly, Mitman notes that we have been hampered in our response by grasping for the magic bullet, for failing to see that we can make our allergies better or worse by manipulating our environment.

Although sometimes enlightening and amusing, *Breathing Space* is, ultimately, a rather messy book. Mitman is a historian of science; yet throughout the book, science takes a back seat to storytelling and cultural criticism. A detailed explanation of the biomechanics of allergic and asthmatic reactions does not appear until the sixth chapter. Often Mitman recounts medical disputes but then leaves them unsettled. We read, for example, that asthma-related mortality rose at the same time that the use of a certain type of inhaler increased. But Mitman does not bother to tell us why: "Whatever the cause of the apparent increase in death rates. . . ." Death, schmeath—whatever.

Mitman derides municipal efforts to reduce asthma suffering by cutting down ragweed in empty lots, but does not provide a convincing explanation to counter any reader's commonsensical intuition that a reduction in pollen-emitters would lead to less pollinated air. Oddly, Mitman often treats *asthma* sufferance as a proxy for *allergy* sufferance, which is not quite accurate. Asthma, an inflammation of the air passages, is caused in many cases by allergens, but may also be triggered by cold air, emotional stress, or viral infections.

Breathing Space reads as if it was written by a leftist literary wannabe. For one, it is phantasmagoric and ill-

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defined. There are six chapters, but they do not provide individual theses that add up to a coherent argument. Frequently, the reader finds himself sucked into lengthy asides that cannot be related to the chapter's point. While this is supposed to be about allergies, you read little about atopic dermatitis, the reaction of the skin to allergens or irritants, or allergic reactions caused by food, medicine, mold, or bee stings.

Additionally, *Breathing Space* is replete with staid rhetorical frameworks, clumsily employed. Mitman runs the old city/country opposition, writing of the early 20th century: "With the shift in medical understanding of hay fever as a disease of the immune rather than nervous system, treatment also shifted and expanded from the therapeutic wilderness to urban clinics." The reader is not sure how to square this thesis with Mitman's lengthy description of the building of an allergy clinic in the Arizona desert at the same time. Enraptured with spatial imagery, he describes the story of allergies as involving man's quest for "breathing spaces," and the movement of allergies "across the boundaries of geography, class, and gender."

Breathing Space is also shot through with peculiar claims. He writes that, at the middle of the past century, there was an "assumption that consumers, particularly women, [had] both a responsibility and a choice to make a healthy home. It is also a version of the American dream shaped largely by the values of the white middle class." Does this mean that nonwhites and others had an alternative vision—say, one where men were obliged to make their homes unsafe and messy? At least twice, Mitman seems to blame humans entirely for allergies: "Antihistamines and other biomedical wonders would soon offer a technological fix to an illness that modern civilization had begun." And "if civilization and progress spawned hay fever, then perhaps there was no better breeding ground than the burgeoning metropolis of Chicago."

The chapter on allergies and cities is both grossly one-sided and kooky. Mitman rails about the "ecology of injustice" and uncritically repeats the assertions of left-wing advocates for the poor and nonwhite. Mitman claims that vacant lots in urban areas are the "by-products of the inefficiencies and injustices of industrial capitalism." He asserts that, in the 1960s, "the black community transformed anger and rage into a positive force of social change." And he describes the Young Lords as "young Puerto Rican activists." He does not speak of those who burned and trashed whole swaths of Newark, Watts, Detroit, and other cities, nor does he lament the criminal activities of the Young Lords. Mitman complains about rats in the homes of the urban poor but then derides a New York City rat-eradication program as "like putting a Band-Aid on an internally hemorrhaging patient." Never mind that the people in the infested slum wanted the rats croaked; and never mind that the anti-rat campaign might have improved the living conditions in 6,000 buildings where 100,000 people reside. On page 150 Mitman reaches the zenith of weirdness: "To the residents of Central Harlem and Spanish Harlem, the cockroach was linked, not to race, but to the inhumanity of beings toward one another. In their eyes, the cockroach became an ally in the protest against economic, racial, and social injustice."

The history of allergies is an interesting one. Sufferers will have to wait for the arrival of another study to learn the full story. ♦

Look Out Below

Religion remains the opiate of the masses, according to Mark Lilla. **BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN**

Mark Lilla could be said to be the anti-Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama's premise, expressed in his *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) and numerous subsequent books and essays, is that modernity, individual liberty, Western-style free-market democracy, and a thoroughly (or almost thoroughly) secularized civil society constitute the logical final fate of every nation on earth, and if this does not currently appear to be the case in some of those nations—such as, oh, say, Iran or China or Venezuela—that is merely because powerful groups frightened of modernity, be they religious or Marxist-ideological, have constructed a few temporary, but only temporary, bumps in the road to the inevitable.

The Stillborn God
Religion, Politics, and the Modern West
by Mark Lilla
Knopf, 352 pp., $26

Lilla, formerly a professor in the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought (whose late Allan Bloom was, ironically, also one of Fukuyama's professors at Cornell during the 1960s) takes quite the opposite stance in this book, based on the Carlyle Lectures he delivered at Oxford in 2003. Lilla argues that such "grand ideas" as the inevitability of modernization, democratization, liberalization, and secularization are "the fairy tales of our time," comforting but utterly false, even for the West, much less for the rest of the planet. In fact, says Lilla, the chief hallmark of the modern Western worldview is its "fragility."

He writes: "The West does seem to have passed some kind of historical watershed, making it unthinkable that

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The frontispiece of Thomas Hobbes's Leviathan*, 1651*

theocracies could spring up among us or that armed bands of religious fanatics could set off a civil war." Yet, as Lilla argues, although modern Western political philosophy can create societies marked by unprecedented material comforts and personal freedom, its studious avoidance of a religious grounding (which would be incompatible with Western liberalism, Lilla implies) fails to satisfy deep human longings for assurance and comprehensiveness, whether concerning the nature of ultimate reality or the nature of their obligations to God and to each other.

This means that religiously agnostic Western societies, far from being durable and universal paradigms for the modernizing non-West, are by their very nature highly unstable, ever vulnerable to collapse as their inhabitants, yearning to make sense of the world around them, constantly yield to the temptation to turn to "political theology"—which Lilla defines as "discourse about political authority based on a revealed divine nexus"—as a substitute for the God-neutral political *philosophy* of the modern West that (at least on paper) allows people of disparate beliefs and moral values to live together in peace, but cannot speak to the questions that are most important to them.

This is a fascinating, if not exactly original, premise, and Lilla attempts to substantiate it with an equally fascinating historical case study: The birth, life, and death of liberal Protestantism and Judaism in 19th- and early 20th-century Germany. Progressive-thinking German theologians in both religions (Friedrich Schleiermacher, Ernst Troeltsch, Adolph von Harnack, Hermann Cohen, and the like), Lilla maintains, undertook to make their faiths compatible with secular liberalism by "reforming" them, typically by getting rid of all that claimed to be transcendent (such as the divinity of Christ or the fearsome, lawmaking God of the Hebrew Bible) and all that smacked of appeals to an authority higher than the mores of comfortable, prosperous, socially progressive, and intellectually skeptical 19th-century Germany.

The liberal experiment in equating one's being a good Christian or Jew with being a productive citizen of secularized German society failed spectacularly in the trenches of World War I and the charnel house that was Europe during World War II. Such was the brief history of what Lilla calls the "stillborn God," the "liberal deity" who proved "unable to inspire genuine conviction among those seeking ultimate truth." Liberal religion could not resolve this conundrum: If that is all there is to Christianity or Judaism—no truth claims, no sovereign Lord—why bother professing either faith?

This, too, is highly promising material. The problem lies in Lilla's execution. To begin with, there is his unstated and unexamined fundamental premise: that political theology—the effort to build and govern human societies according to the principles taught by one's faith—is a Very Bad Thing. And by "political theology" Lilla specifically means Christian political theology. His use of that politically loaded word "theocracies" (with its behind-the-scenes specter, Bush the Evangelical Bogeyman) is the giveaway. Lilla never bothers to engage any actual works of Christian political theology: not Augustine's *City of God*, not Thomas Aquinas's disquisitions on natural law, not the "mirrors of princes" that proliferated during the Middle Ages, not Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, not even Calvin's *Institutes*, which formed the basis for some of the very few genuine theocracies in the long history of Christianity.

Instead, Lilla combines broad and dubious generalizations about inherent contradictions he sees in the Christian religion that make it particularly susceptible to bad political thinking and,

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hence, violence—Christ's entering, and then abruptly leaving, the world, engendering dangerous apocalyptic longings for his Second Coming; a plethora of complex doctrines about the Incarnation and Trinity that generated a plethora of heresies and heresy-hunters; and the paradox that Christians are supposed to be not of this world yet, after the rise of Constantine, became the world's rulers—with potted history. (Like Fukuyama, Lilla tends to confuse the history of philosophy with actual historical events.)

In Lilla's historical scheme, the "conflicts rooted in the deepest ambiguities of Christian revelation" came to a head in the religious wars of the Reformation and its aftermath. During the 16th and 17th centuries, Lilla avers, "Christians hunted and killed Christians with a maniacal fury once reserved for Muslims, Jews, and heretics alone." (This is a sentence worth unpacking for its revelations about its author's prejudices, since Christian violence against Jews was real enough but quite sporadic, and as for "Muslims"—a religious group with a distinct "political theology" that is mostly ignored in this book—it was Islam that, having systematically obliterated the Christian civilizations of the Near East and North Africa, constituted the single most aggressive threat to the survival of Christian Western Europe from the seventh through the 17th centuries.)

At any rate, ignoring the efforts of at least some Christian rulers and Christian societies during and after the Reformation to devise policies that would stanch the sectarian bloodshed—the Peace of Augsburg, the Edict of Nantes, the Swiss Federation, the North American colonies with their religious freedoms—Lilla writes, "The greatest lesson was that entering into the logic of political theology in any form leads into a dead end, and that none of its twisting paths issued out into a decent political life for human beings."

And so we come to (and if you took Political Science 101 in college, you have already guessed it) Thomas Hobbes, godfather of the modern secular state. Hobbes had little use for religion in any form and believed that human beings were chiefly motivated by desire for pleasure and fear of calamity, and so they invented gods and then one God to be supplicated so as to avoid the latter and maximize the former. Hobbes was the author of what Lilla calls the Great Separation: the idea that political philosophy could be divorced from religious claims and cater strictly to human psychology and its pleasure-pain nexus. Once Hobbes spoke, and influenced a variety of other political theorists, including Locke, Montesquieu, the authors of the Federalist Papers, and Tocqueville, Lilla argues, the Great Separation became a permanent and unbridgeable divide between Western modernity and the credulous, premodern past.

Later thinkers, chiefly Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel, while firmly on this side of the Great Separation (that is, disbelieving in the Christian creeds, divine revelation, and the irruption of the supernatural into ordinary life), were more sympathetic toward faith than Hobbes and tended to view religion, or at least the religious impulse, as a benign psychological and cultural force. Hegel, in particular, argued that the human mind craves "absolute knowing," and that the history of religion in the West is actually a history of Western culture itself, with its various religious myths and rituals serving as reflections of a constant human striving toward deeper self-understanding.

In Hegel's grand and optimistic historical design, the 19th-century German state, with its prosperous and cultivated middle class and its theologically liberal German Protestantism focused on the cultivation of virtues beneficial to life in the here and now, represented a kind of culmination of social and individual progress.

Lilla's discussion of the works of these three philosophers, while lucid and eloquent, is quite detailed—indeed, far more detailed than it ought to be for essentially preliminary material. As Lilla slowly works his way through a lengthy summary of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to a lengthy summary of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the reader might be forgiven for thumbing through the pages ahead, groaning at the prospect that the long chapter on Kant will be followed by an equally long chapter on Hegel, and wondering when on earth Lilla will cut to the chase. It is not until page 226, in fact, that Lilla finally gets to the ostensible subject of his book: those liberal German theologians of the 19th and early 20th centuries who were profoundly influenced by Hegel.

Those theologians are grossly understudied these days, which is unfortunate because the theories about the Bible and Christian history asserted by Troeltsch and Harnack, in particular, became, and in some ways still remain, standard theological fare in mainline Protestant seminaries throughout the West, especially in America. Lilla, however, running out of space in a book with only 309 pages of text, can spare just 25 pages for the whole lot of them. He also tends to slight other influences upon liberal theology besides Kantian and Hegelian philosophy, namely the twin rises of scientific rationalism and the German research university, which conferred great prestige upon German thinking but also made it seem necessary for every academic discipline (including theology) to become a form of *Wissenschaft*.

At any rate, Lilla argues that the liberal Germans of the 19th century resurrected political theology (albeit in a "weak" and "complacent" form) from the grave in which it had lain since Hobbes effected the Great Separation. As Lilla writes in one of his most eloquent and perceptive passages:

> The God of the Old Testament moved mysteriously over the deep and called the nations to repentance; the liberal God shuffled methodically through human history, rearranging things as he went. The Jesus of the New Testament did not bring peace, but a sword; the liberal Jesus brought books and sheet music. The Christian Redeemer died on a cross; the liberal one survived as a good Bürger reconciled to modern German life.

Liberal Protestants assimilated their beliefs to the mores of the cultural elite, while liberal Jews assimilated their beliefs to liberal Protestantism.

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Eventually 19th-century liberal religion proved to be thin gruel even for progressive-minded Germans (the counterreaction, *contra* Lilla, actually began well before World War I, with, among other things, Albert Schweitzer's evisceration of the pallid Christology of the liberals in his *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (1906). It is here, with a discussion of two towering forces in the 20th-century counter-movement, the neo-Orthodox theologian Karl Barth on the Christian side and the existentialist/mystical philosopher Franz Rosenzweig on the Jewish side, that Lilla's argument becomes most tortured.

His premise is that the 19th-century liberals, in resuscitating political theology, opened a Pandora's box out of which eventually flew all the evils of religious passion that Hobbes had identified and sought to suppress and that liberal Protestantism had deemed passé: messianic longings, eschatological violence, desire for immediate redemption, and so on. In other words, Lilla argues, the blame for those twin political nightmares of the 20th century, National Socialism and Marxism-Leninism, can be laid squarely at the feet of—Christianity, or rather, theologians who believed that the Christian Bible was more than a collection of uplifting platitudes.

Lilla does realize that this argument contains some problems. Barth, after all, drafted the Barmen Declaration of 1934, which invoked distinctly unliberal grounds (the sovereignty of Jesus Christ) to condemn the Protestant churches' acquiescence to state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, and Rosenzweig was resolutely apolitical, writing of the Jews as "the eternal people" in their witness to the law of God. Furthermore, it was the *liberal* German churchmen, with their feeble theology, who went along with Hitler's promise to restore prewar German glory, and a Barmen signer, Dietrich Bonhöffer, who was martyred by the Nazis. Nonetheless, Lilla is eager to demonstrate that the rise of 20th-century totalitarianism was somehow connected to a "backsliding" into "political theology," so he casts about and manages to come up with two theologians (or quasi-theologians) to shoehorn into his paradigm: Friedrich Gogarten, an antiliberal German Christian intellectual who actually did support Hitler, and the ethnically Jewish Ernst Bloch, an atheist and Marxist who believed that the Hebrew and Christian scriptures presented a blueprint for Communist revolution.

Clearly implicit in this book is the premise that we, too, in the 21st-century West, face the ever-present threat of "backsliding" into religiously driven totalitarianism—especially, although Lilla is too sophisticated a writer to say this, with You Know Who at the American presidential helm.

"We have wagered that it is wiser to beware the forces unleashed by the Bible's messianic promise than to try exploiting them for the public good," writes Lilla.

Well, maybe, if you are a secular political liberal who thinks that there is nothing scarier than believing Christians at the ballot box. There is, indeed, a live and worldwide threat of a religious totalitarianism that seeks to engulf the West and obliterate its civilization, but unfortunately for Mark Lilla, it does not come from those who believe that the Bible is the eternal word of God. ♦

Romantic at Heart

Bloom's critique of unreason, and what it owes to Santayana. **BY JAMES SEATON**

The 20th anniversary of the publication of *The Closing of the American Mind* is a good time to ask whether Allan Bloom's bestseller was a book of its moment, or a work of permanent significance.

A 2007 rereading suggests that both the emotional power that made it a bestseller and its intellectual limitations derive from an aspect of the book neglected by both proponents and attackers: its unacknowledged but intense romanticism. This romanticism charges *Closing* with emotional authenticity, but also leads to an overrating of the esoteric wisdom and sheer intensity Bloom associates with true philosophers, and an underestimation of the common sense and practical wisdom of ordinary Americans.

Bloom's romanticism becomes clear if one compares *The Closing of the American Mind* to another famous analysis of American culture and society: George Santayana's *Character and Opinion in the United States*.

There are a number of striking parallels between Bloom's 1987 work and Santayana's 1920 analysis of American culture. Both stressed the impact of German philosophy. Bloom found "the master lyricists" Nietzsche and Heidegger at the source of some of the most pervasive aspects of American culture, while Santayana believed that the American genteel tradition was enabled by the academic prestige of German philosophical idealism.

Both Bloom and Santayana turned to their own universities to discern wider cultural patterns. Bloom found that intellectual trends at the University of Chicago, where he was a student and finally a professor, both influenced and reflected broader currents in American culture, while Santayana took Harvard, where he was both a student and a professor, as exemplifying the academic environment that allowed the genteel tradition to flourish. Both judged the American scene from the viewpoint of what each took to be the essential

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philosophical perspective: that of those whom Bloom called the "knowers" and Santayana the "true philosophers."

One important difference between the two analyses lies in their attitudes and judgments about those aspects of American culture remote from theoretical or philosophical discourse. Asserting in *Closing* that "an experience of profound contempt is necessary in order to grasp our situation," Allan Bloom is indeed contemptuous of many aspects of the life of ordinary Americans. His own relatives seem unable to talk without lapsing into trivialities: "When they [my relatives] talk about heaven and earth, the relations between men and women, parents and children, the human condition, I hear nothing but clichés, superficialities, the material of satire."

It isn't that people have hidden depths they are simply unable to express; the superficiality goes deep down. According to Bloom, "the dreariness of the family's spiritual landscape passes belief," and the college students trying to escape from the family's "dreariness" by way of casual sex are no better. He does not object to student sexual activity because it is irresponsible or immoral but because it is insufficiently passionate: "The eroticism of our students is lame." Bloom is disappointed that his students are not willing to risk everything for the sake of love: "Their lack of passion, of hope, of despair, of a sense of the twinship of love and death, is incomprehensible to me." He laments that "sexual passion no longer includes the illusion of eternity."

Bloom wanted people to live intense, serious lives. He was not so much disturbed that American culture seemed ultimately nihilistic—he speculates in *Closing* that "nihilism is a dangerous but a necessary and a possibly salutary stage in human history" —but because Americans didn't seem to take nihilism seriously. "American nihilism," he declared, was "nihilism without the abyss." Americans in general are "easygoing" rather than "serious," and therefore arouse Bloom's contempt. He praises Nietzsche for replacing "easygoing or self-satisfied atheism with agonized atheism," but Americans haven't gotten the message. In the United States, acceptance of Nietzsche's thesis on "the radical subjectivity of all belief about good and evil" did not lead to agonizing reappraisal of the meaning of life, but instead "served the easygoing quest for comfortable self-preservation."

George Santayana, Allan Bloom

SANTAYANA: GEORGE SILK/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; BLOOM: COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CHRONICLE

Meanwhile, Bloom singles out "the intransigent facing of death—in the sense of always thinking about it and what it means for life and the things dear in life" as especially "characteristic of a serious life." In every period and culture it is only a small minority—the true philosophers, the "knowers"—who have been willing and able to confront the reality of death and thus live lives that are truly "serious." A true philosopher of any school "looks at things under the guise of eternity," and thus "the essential difference between the philosopher and all other men is his facing of death or his relation to eternity." Bloom argued that this "essential difference" is just as real today as it was in the time of Socrates: "The great modern philosophers were as much philosophers as were the ancients. They were perfectly conscious of what separates them from all other men, and they knew that the gulf is unbridgeable."

For Bloom, "Philosophy is not a doctrine but a way of life," and thus "the philosophers in their closets or their academies have entirely different ends than the rest of mankind."

Like Allan Bloom, George Santayana thought of philosophy as a way of life, and when he asserts that "the true philosophers . . . have seen all things in the light of eternity," he sounds much like Allan Bloom emphasizing the difference between "the philosophers in their closets" and the rest of us. There is, however, a key difference of emphasis. Bloom's conception emphasizes not the knowledge that the philosopher achieves but, rather, the "intensity" and the "intransigence" with which he or she confronts "the alternatives . . . in full recognition that every choice is a great risk with necessary consequences that are hard to bear." Bloom seems to assume that any true philosopher today will be an atheist, but the important question is whether it will be an "easygoing or self-satisfied atheism" or the truly philosophical "agonized atheism." Bloom's emphasis on "intensity," "intransigence," and an "agonized" outlook as goods in themselves reveals a perspective that can only be called romantic. He is not interested in happiness but in romantic assertion and aspiration, whatever they may cost.

It should be emphasized that there are passages in *Closing* that express attitudes far from romantic. Criticizing "the part of the mythology of the sixties" involving "the alleged superior

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moral 'concern' of the students," Bloom suggests the superiority of everyday, common-sense morality to what one might characterize (though Bloom does not) as the romanticism of the students of the 1960s:

> There is a perennial and unobtrusive view that morality consists in such things as telling the truth, paying one's debts, respecting one's parents and doing no voluntary harm to anyone. Those are all things easy to say and hard to do; they do not attract much attention, and win little honor on the world. . . . This was not the morality that came into vogue in the sixties, which was an altogether more histrionic version of moral conduct, the kind that characterizes heroes in extreme situations.

If Bloom had taken up this "perennial and unobtrusive view" and made it his own by defending it against the ideas of the thinkers whom he takes most seriously—Rousseau, Nietzsche, Heidegger, all three proponents of "histrionic versions of moral conduct" and connoisseurs of "extreme situations"—then *The Closing of the American Mind* would have been a more thoughtful, less romantic book. And probably not a bestseller.

Bloom applauds Nietzsche for seeking "with his value philosophy to restore the harsh conflicts for which men were willing to die" while lamenting that Nietzsche's "value philosophy was used in America for exactly the opposite purpose—to promote conflict-resolution, bargaining, harmony." Santayana, on the other hand, regards the romantic preference for struggle rather than fulfillment as an expression of an unphilosophical failure to consider human life and the universe as fully as possible—a failure to consider them "in the light of eternity." Thus Santayana criticizes Nietzsche's notion of the superman for its emphasis on mere intensity or "vehemence," rather than on the achievement of the serenity available when one renounces personal egotism and takes the viewpoint of God or eternity. In Santayana's view, Nietzsche's intensity is neither philosophic nor admirable: Nietzsche, Santayana comments, "loved mere life with the pathetic intensity of the wounded beast," while

> The saints and the true philosophers . . . have seen all things in the light of eternity—that is, as they are in truth—and have consequently felt a reasonable contempt for mere living and mere dying; and in that precisely lies moral greatness. Here Nietzsche could not follow; rationality chilled him; he craved vehemence.

The "reasonable contempt" that the true philosopher feels "for mere living and mere dying" means that the philosopher does not regard his or her individual life as the center of all things and personal death as the ultimate catastrophe.

Yet the achievement of serenity through recognizing and accepting one's place in the universe does not translate, in Santayana, to contempt for nonphilosophers who have not made a comparable intellectual journey. Santayana does not claim that the intense seriousness of the philosopher gives him a ground for feeling that the lives of others are comparatively trivial, or that the philosopher is morally superior to others because of his intellectual courage. Instead, those with a philosophical bent are more fortunate than others; unlike other people, philosophers "have always had a royal road to complete satisfaction" since they are able to appreciate a pleasure one is always free to enjoy—"the pleasure of understanding."

Whereas Bloom suggests that philosophers deserve to be honored because they shoulder a heavier burden than the rest of us in confronting the reality of death, Santayana suggests that philosophy, properly understood, makes life more bearable. In *Character and Opinion* he comments that

> If we define the intellect as the power to see things as they are, it is clear that in so far as the philosopher is a pure intellect the universe will be a pure good to the philosopher. . . . Wisdom counsels us therefore to become philosophers and to concentrate our lives as much as possible in pure intelligence, that we may be led by it into the ways of peace. . . . The universe will have become in that measure a good to us, and we shall be better able to live happily and freely in it.

While in *The Closing of the American Mind* Bloom suggests that the superficial absorption of German philosophy in the United States has led to a culture in which all but a very few lead lives devoid of significance, Santayana argues that American society and Americans deserve the respect of philosophers.

Santayana observes in *Character and Opinion* that, even as academic philosophers in the genteel tradition were congratulating themselves on overcoming common sense to reach "the remarkable conclusion that the human spirit was not so much the purpose of the universe as its seat, and the only universe there was," ordinary, unphilosophical Americans were successfully building a way of life "in harmony with the nature of things." In the United States he finds "the spirit of free co-operation" nurtured in England taken to a new level: "Everywhere co-operation is taken for granted. . . . The general instinct is to run and help, to assume direction, to pull through somehow by mutual adaptation, by seizing on the readiest practical measures and working compromises."

Santayana considers this union of spontaneous cooperation with individual liberty, which he calls "English liberty," something for a philosopher to wonder at: "If we consider human nature at large and the practice of most nations, we shall see that it is a very rare, wonderful, and unstable convention." The very unwillingness of Americans to formulate and embrace an overarching philosophy beyond their "constitutional religion" turns out to be an advantage: "In the end, adaptation to the world at large, where so much is hidden and unintelligible, is only possible piecemeal, by groping with a genuine indetermination in one's aims. . . . Co-operation is better than policy, and empiricism safer than inspiration." Ordinary Americans were, it turns out, more "in harmony with the nature of things" than were the accredited philosophers.

Allan Bloom ended *The Closing of the American Mind* by observing that "just as in politics the responsibility for the fate of freedom in the world has devolved upon our regime, so the fate of philosophy in the world had devolved

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upon our universities" and asserting that "the two are related as they have never been before." On his own telling, however, it is not clear what the connection between the two might be. According to Bloom himself, philosophers have for centuries "engaged in a gentle art of deception," since their connection with any particular political order is, if not hostile, not helpful either. The philosophers, after all, "have entirely different aims than the rest of mankind." Santayana, writing with "the tone and attitude of a detached observer," did not expect to influence the course of events. Nevertheless, he observed, "to take as calm and as long a view as possible seems to be but another name for the love of truth."

Today, Santayana's conclusion seems prescient: "Absolute liberty and English liberty are incompatible, and mankind must make a painful and a brave choice between them." Santayana would not be surprised to learn that, today, when "English liberty" is threatened by a fanaticism demanding the "absolute liberty" to remake the world with no compromises whatsoever, his judgment of their incompatibility is more likely to be shared by ordinary Americans than by the academic heirs of the genteel tradition at Harvard and elsewhere.

Allan Bloom's tone and attitude are neither detached nor calm and, indeed, much of the appeal of his work comes from its intensely personal tone and its honest indignation. The contemporary version of the genteel tradition is surely the collection of taboos known as "political correctness," most of which were violated with energetic aplomb by Bloom in his famous book. *The Closing of the American Mind* may not be a work for all time, but it was desperately needed in its own time, and 20 years after publication, its protest against "the suppression of reason and the denial of the possibility of truth in the name of philosophy" remains all too relevant.

The praise that George Santayana gave to William James is surely applicable to Allan Bloom as well: "An honest man has spoken, and the cant of the genteel tradition [today 'political correctness' in all its forms] has become harder for young lips to repeat." ♦

Cold Harbor, Virginia, April 1865

In Brief

Some holiday suggestions for the military buff on your list. **BY PHILIP TERZIAN**

***Civil War Leadership and Mexican War Experience* by Kevin Dougherty (Mississippi, 207 pp., $50).** When General Grant met General Lee at Appomattox, they broke the ice by reminiscing about their mutual experience in the Mexican War. Grant's attitude toward that conflict, expressed in his memoirs, is well known ("I was bitterly opposed to [the annexation of Mexico], and to this day, regard the war, which resulted, as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation"); but politics aside, even Grant conceded it was a demanding school that had taught nearly all the senior Civil War commanders what they knew about combat. Dougherty's novel technique is to divide his list of prominent American officers into Federals and Confederates, and provide a biographical essay for each to illustrate a lesson on soldiering in general, and the Mexican War in particular. They're all here—"George McClellan and Siege Warfare," "Stonewall Jackson and the Role of Artillery," "George Meade and Missed Opportunity," "George Pickett and the Quest for Glory"—and it is interesting to see the extent to which the habits and behavior of these men, for good or ill, would be duplicated a dozen years later in the War Between the States. The author is a retired officer now on the faculty of the University of Southern Mississippi, and his style is appropriately businesslike. But for any student of the Civil War, and generalship, this is a diverting and instructive study.

***This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* by Drew Gilpin Faust (Knopf, 368 pp., $27.95).** Until her appointment as president of Harvard last winter, Drew Gilpin Faust was best known as a historian of the South and the Civil War, with emphasis on social and cultural issues. With this volume, completed just before she was swallowed up by administrative duties, Faust burnishes her scholarly credentials with a fascinating study of the impact of death in the Civil War on American life, thoughts, customs, and predilections. Every schoolboy knows that more Americans died during the Civil War (approximately 620,000) than all other American wars combined, but few schoolboys have bothered to contemplate the effects of this sudden,

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unexpected culture of death on a young, predominantly rural, deeply religious, largely isolated population. Faust makes the point that the "Civil War's death rate, its incidence in comparison with the size of the American population, was six times that of World War II. A similar rate, about two percent, in the United States today would mean six million fatalities." Casualties were not confined to the ranks—the landscape, especially in the South, was devastated, houses and livestock destroyed, civilians killed or left destitute—nor was death the only long-term devastation for soldiers, who were crippled and maimed in prodigious numbers. The country was forced to adapt to these horrific facts, in ways practical and sublime: Battlefield embalming and burial techniques were perfected, as was the system of death notification and grave registration. In the aftermath of the war—in the establishment of veterans' associations, the design and dedication of monuments, in literature, politics, and religion, in civic observances and the cultivation of the Lost Cause epic in the South—the nation came to terms with death in warfare, in unprecedented volume, and in ways still reflected in American life today. This is a stunning, eloquent, and valuable work.

***The Public Schools Battalion in the Great War* by Steve Hurst (Pen & Sword, 224 pp., $39.95).** The subtitle—"A History of the 16th (Public Schools) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment (Duke of Cambridge's Own) August 1914 to July 1916"—scarcely begins to describe the richness of experience and wealth of information the author has supplied here. This was an infantry battalion, organized at the outset of the Great War, recruited from the ranks of public (read private) school 'old boys' whose attitude will be familiar to any reader of Rupert Brooke or Julian Grenfell. In due course, the battalion grew swiftly and saw action from the start, officers were peeled off by commands in other regiments, and its core was massacred on the opening day of the Battle of the Somme (July 1, 1916). Hurst's touch is deft, his eye for the telling detail is unerring, and military jargon is gracefully translated into English. Moreover, because he began his research decades before publication, the author was able to draw on the recollections and observations of survivors, whose testimony is sharp, poignant, unsentimental—and now, of course, posthumous. The experience of combat was never more horrific than on the Western Front, come to life in this notable addition to the literature of war.

***D-Day in the Pacific: The Battle of Saipan* by Harold J. Goldberg (Indiana, 276 pp., $29.95).** Two decisive battles of World War II were fought in June 1944, and an argument could be made that the bloody, month-long American campaign against the Japanese on Saipan and Tinian islands was as important for the Pacific theater as the invasion of Normandy was for Europe. For whatever reason, the Japanese resistance—no surrender for combatants, suicide of civilians—is better known to posterity than the grueling, grinding American invasion (about 14,000 dead, wounded, or missing), but seizure of the Marianas was a major strategic victory for the United States. This was the heart of Japan's inner defense line, and the establishment of air bases allowed B-29s to operate within striking distance of Tokyo and other cities—including, of course, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is the latest volume in the Twentieth-Century Battles series of Indiana University Press, and Harold J. Goldberg, chairman of Asian studies at Sewanee, has written a lively, concise, comprehensive account. And not exclusively concerned with combat, either: The controversial relief of Army Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith of the 27th Infantry Division by Marine Lt. Gen. Holland M. (Howlin' Mad) Smith of the Fifth Amphibious Corps is recorded here with scrupulous fairness and a knowing eye for the permutations of Army-Navy conflict, interservice rivalry, career management, and the clash of personalities. There was plenty of politics in World War II, from the sands of Iwo Jima (or Saipan, in this case) to the corridors of the Pentagon (or War and Navy departments, until 1943). ♦

Afghan Story

A nation's agony in the saga of two boys.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The Kite Runner
Directed by Marc Forster

The Kite Runner is enormously affecting, but it's not very good. This makes it a perfect cinematic adaptation of the bestselling novel by Khaled Hosseini about Afghanistan. The movie's superb screenwriter, David Benioff, has expertly streamlined Hosseini's sprawling and episodic novel into a tight two-hour film, and in doing so, actually improves on the original. Still, as both novel and movie, *The Kite Runner* is a lumpy melodrama with too-good-to-be-true characters and wildly implausible plot twists that strain even minimal credulity. And yet somehow, in both its forms, *The Kite Runner* is basically beyond criticism.

The true purpose of *The Kite Runner* is didactic, and nobly so. It provides an easily digestible guide to one of the world's most unfortunately important places with the intent of branding its troubles on the popular imagination, and it succeeds brilliantly. *The Kite Runner* is an effective reminder of the world-changing nature of the Soviet invasion in 1979, of

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the moral and practical value of the removal of the Taliban from power in 2001, and a message to Afghans themselves about why their tribal rivalries are foolish, disastrous, and immoral.

Hosseini compresses Afghanistan's suffering into the experience of two Afghan boys, one a high-born Pashtun named Amir and the other a lowly Hazara named Hassan, who are nine years old when the story begins in the mid-1970s. They are close friends, but, as is true of their fathers, they are also master and servant. The servant boy is brave and noble and the high-born boy is cowardly and selfish. And when the high-born boy commits a guilt-ridden offense against his inferior friend, he must contend with the shame and sorrow of his betrayal.

Ahmad Khan Mahmoodzada as Hassan and Zekiria Ebrahimi as Amir

DREAMWORKS PICTURES

The movie, like the book, milks to great effect the primal anxiety that comes from showing torments and trials visited on little boys, whose effort to assume a manly stiff upper lip in the face of abuse only points out how small and defenseless they actually are. Both Hosseini and the movie's director, Marc Forster, display a brutally effective Dickensian ghoulishness in this regard. Forster takes a scene directly out of the book in which a boy is forced to act like a dancing monkey and turns it into a moment of almost unbearably sickening power.

Amir's lonely guilt toward Hassan haunts him throughout his adulthood until a twist of fate affords him a chance at clearing his conscience. To do so, Amir, now an American citizen living in Silicon Valley, must sneak back to Afghanistan in disguise during the height of Taliban rule.

In seeking his redemption, Amir is also trying to live up to the example set by his own father, Baba. On their difficult trek out of Afghanistan in the back of a truck following the Soviet invasion, Baba shows his heroic mettle by confronting a Soviet soldier who will only allow their truck to pass if he is allowed to rape a woman riding with them.

"I'll take a thousand of his bullets before I'll let this indecency take place," Baba says, and is only saved from death when the soldier's superior arrives and tells the would-be rapist to let the truck pass.

It's a terrific scene (though not a believable one) acted to perfection by Homayon Ershadi, an Iranian who, if there is any justice, will win an Academy Award for his performance. The character of Baba is especially welcome in the Year of the Anti-Immigrant because *The Kite Runner* offers a brief but telling look at the hard-working Afghans who found a home in the United States after the Soviet takeover. Baba is reduced to working at a gas station during the week and selling junk at a flea market on weekends.

The flea market is populated with other Afghan exiles, including a former general whom Amir must court with some sycophancy to win his beautiful daughter's hand. The Afghans we see here make their way in the new world without complaint and with great pride at their ability to adapt. In this respect, *The Kite Runner* is a companion piece to *The Namesake*, the wonderful and heart-rending portrait of an Indian family living in America that was released earlier this year.

But all this is secondary to the movie's central achievement: its portrait of Afghanistan's late 20th-century descent into Hell. The sequences set in Afghanistan under Taliban rule hit the viewer with the force of a nightmare. It is a depiction of rack and ruin, with streets covered in rubble, orphanages with no heat or electricity, corpses subjected to public hanging still dangling from nooses days later. A woman accused of adultery is brought to a soccer stadium and stoned to death during halftime, with the first stone hurled by a young Talib with a thick beard and wildly incongruous Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses with mirrored lenses.

The Taliban's tortures stand in marked contrast to the freedom represented by the kites that blanket the sky over Kabul in the movie's opening scenes, and make an appearance again at its conclusion, testifying to the indomitability of the Afghan spirit. One leaves the theater spent and overwhelmed. These aren't necessarily the most pleasant of emotions, and the film that generates them is not a work of art. But like its literary progenitor, it's something very memorable—almost in spite of itself. ♦

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"In every faith I have come to know, there are features I wish were in my own: I love the profound ceremony of the Catholic Mass, the approachability of God in the prayers of the Evangelicals, the tenderness of spirit among the Pentecostals, the confident independence of the Lutherans, the ancient traditions of the Jews, unchanged through the ages, and the commitment to frequent prayer of the Muslims." —Mitt Romney, December 6, 2007

MITT ROMNEY FOR PRESIDENT

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MEMORANDUM

Beth—
See my edits below, needs work.
—WMR

To: Gov. Romney
From: Speech Team
Re: Operation Bethlehem -- CONFIDENTIAL/CLOSE HOLD

Governor, we are still having a speck of trouble with the "Rainbow of Faith" section in The Speech. The text reads: "…and in every faith I have come to know, there are features I wish were in my own:" followed by lines on six major religious groups. We realize this could be a minefield. Please review and pick the line you like best:

YOU GOT IT!

Catholics:
[ ] I love the ~~close brotherhood of Catholic faith~~ NO! TOO GAY!
[ ] I love the spirit of forgiveness that illuminates the Catholic Church "Illuminates?" What are we selling here—light bulbs?
[✓] I love the profound ceremony of the Catholic Mass

Evangelicals:
[✓] the approachability of God in the prayers of the Evangelicals. Can we get away with this mush?
[ ] the inventive spirit in ~~electronic communications of the Evangelicals~~. NO!

Pentecostals: NO! Why not just say "Hillbillies?"
[ ] the ~~folk wisdom and simple truth of the~~ Pentecostal.
[✓] the tenderness of spirit among the Pentecostals. Tender? One of them tried to throw a snake at me last week!
[ ] the ~~love of banjos and other great American string instruments~~ of the Pentecostals. FIRE THE IDIOT WHO WROTE THIS!

Lutherans: What the H-E-double toothpicks is a Lutheran anyway??
[✓] the confident independence of the Lutherans ← Still don't know what this means.
[ ] the ~~hearty Scandinavian laughter of the~~ Lutherans NO!

Jews (could be tricky): Maybe. Run it by the Osmonds; they know Hollywood. Don't want to offend anyone.
[ ] the gift for laughter and entertaining of the Jewish People.
[ ] the spirit of ~~commerce and achievement of the~~ Jews. NO!!! Is Rudy PAYING you to wipe me out?!? Golly, this is a bad one.
[✓] the ancient traditions of the Jews.

Muslims (we are having some trouble with this): ← YOU explain this one to AIPAC. NO.
[ ] the ~~commitment to community of the Muslims~~.
[ ] ~~the passion of the Muslim people~~ — Yeah, right. KA-BOOM! No way.
[ ] the beautiful script of the Arabic language.
Cripes, THIS is the best you got? Just do something about how they like to pray all the time—short and sweet. Let Obama do the "I love Muslims" stuff.

Q: What about the Christian Scientists?!?

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